

CHINA



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*MIRROR OF
CHINA*

*Translated from the French for the first time
by Catherine Alison Phillips*

MIRROR OF CHINA

by
LOUIS LALOY



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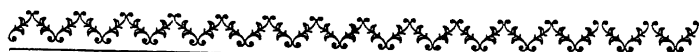
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FORESHADOWINGS





FAREWELLS

The smoky window-pane—that artificial sky—looked out of old upon a smiling prospect of woods and fields, a river between banks fringed with bushes, and fields that were the family inheritance; on a house austere, yet with the fostering tenderness of a grandparent; on a church with its attendant tombs, the songs of girls, and the spring that wells up cool in the summer shades. As I cross this threshold today, it is the dark future that awaits me. The electric lamps shed a wan light on the anxious travellers searching for their berths. Nearly all, like myself, are armed with one at least of those flat suit-cases which will go under the iron bed in a cabin, and so accompany one about. If these business men or officials are travelling so far, it is to earn their livelihood. An Englishman, tanned a russet brown and already clad in khaki linen, as though in the tropics, has just boarded the train, and though he can barely speak our language, drops a remark in French in his loud voice as he passes down the corridor on the event which is exercising his mind: “Rubber fallen heavily in Bombay yesterday.” It is not for me to find fault with this trader for the care he gives to his interests, but I have no answer to make, for I do not belong to the class—or caste, as they call it out there—of merchants. He ascribes my silence to contempt and turns his back on me, while I am left at a loss to arrange my own thoughts, forced as I am to keep them to myself, and embarrassed as an intruder who sits holding his

Farewells

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bag on his knees in a crowded compartment where nobody makes room for him.

The train has moved—barely an inch or two, yet enough to make our hands loosen their clasp, which they will not repeat till long months have gone past. I return to the car to take a look at my luggage, but scold myself at once for this absurd, though instinctive impulse. Too late, however. The train is now moving so fast that the platform is blotted out by a halo of dust and steam, in which I can no longer distinguish a face or return a glance.

Spirit, return;  
The East no safety knows.  
Spirit, 'tis thee the monstrous giants seek.  
Metal and stone ten suns together fuse.  
Accustomed these: to thee they ruin spell.  
Return, return;  
This land no safety knows.

Spirit, return!  
The South is perilous.  
Black teeth and tattooed brows the slayers mark,  
Who drink men's bones. See how the serpents writhe,  
The leopards pounce, the monsters with nine heads  
Seek on whose life-blood they may glut their hearts.  
Return, return!  
This is an evil land.

This Chinese poem, which dates from the third century B.C., bears witness to the taste of the cultivated classes in those days for popular beliefs and magic practices. The spirit of a sage in despair has just left the body in search of another world in which his counsels might find a better hearing, and

## *The Signs of the Earth*

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the object is to bring him back while there is yet time by exciting his terror of the dangers which lie in wait for him in any of the six paths through space along which he might venture. In me the opposite process is taking place: it is my body that is departing. Is it my spirit that remains behind, calling to me in tones of warning?



THE SIGNS OF THE EARTH

For the European curious to know China the sea-route is a succession of lessons. Making too sharp a bend, it nearly touches the Equator, only to turn north again towards temperate climes. The boat proceeds at a pace hardly faster than that of a freight-train, yet fast enough to throw off a surge of foaming water from its bows. Every port at which it touches is a geography lesson concentrated into a few hours, and one has time to tell it over again during the days of smooth monotony and idleness that follow, for polite conversations, regular siestas, parlour games, daily concerts, and tramps up and down the covered deck cannot fill the void. Though all things conspire to offer diversion, time is still left to meditate. In spite of the zeal with which, so to speak, every chink in the day is caulked, no sooner is one seam filled than another opens beside it, and memories come pouring in.

Ranged one beyond another, different coasts rise from the sea at intervals before the advancing ship, all different in aspect and in climate. Progress is measured by their successive appearances: the earth is changing its face.

Port Said

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"Raising his head, he gazed upon the constellations of heaven. Lowering it, he contemplated the forms on earth." Thus does the *Book of Changes*, most venerable among the sacred books of China, present the first of the emperors who was a man, and not a monster or a god. It was he who laid down the principles of both knowledge and civilization. The book continues: "He gazed on the adornment of birds and quadrupeds, corresponding to the conformation of the earth. Their immediate application he made to himself; their remoter one he made to all living creatures."

Following his example, we too must interpret the signs of the earth.



## PORT SAID

This is but a wayside halt. Arriving in the morning, we start again towards noon. Our boat burns oil, so these few hours will suffice to replenish the tanks from the great pipes brought out on barges and screwed into her sides.

Before she has ceased moving, we are importuned by black or copper-coloured swimmers who cleave their way through the foul water. "*A la mér, à la mér!*" they cry with their Levantine accent, clamouring indefatigably for us to throw coins "into the sea," and catching these before they sink into the muddy sea-bottom, diving with a great splash and fighting beneath the foam. All rise together to the surface quite amicably, the lucky one opening his mouth in a broad grin and taking out of it the round nickel coin which he holds up,

## Port Said

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making it flash in the sun; the spectators lounging on the decks applaud him and so the game goes on. At every port in Africa the land, too small for the idlers swarming upon it, casts forth from its shores these amphibious beggars.

Just as passengers alight from the train to stretch their legs, so most of them go on shore here, where everything is laid out for purchasers or loungers. We have hardly reached the quay before we are marked down. A sly old fellow approaches, so like a Turk in a comic opera in his short tunic, full trousers, and cotton stockings that he seems almost to have assumed this costume, and perhaps his hooked nose and grey moustache too, in response to our demand for local colour. We refuse to be tempted and he persists in following us as we cross the road. We have to shout at him to drive him away; but next a band of brown-faced Arabs, as in a French *comédie-ballet*, with conical fezzes and trailing robes, pretending to jostle one another and exchanging abuse to their hearts' content as they press upon us, surround us and hold us prisoner.

Where do they come from? Out of all these streets where they have been waiting in the dust and dung, all ready with the patter which they have long since learnt by heart, waiting to descend upon the traveller like flies beneath the blazing sun. If one drives them off, the swarm only disperses and forms again immediately, denser and more active than before. This is a plague of Egypt which Moses forgot—perhaps with good reason.

They offer us boxes of cigarettes, necklaces, postcards, walking-sticks; and if we persist in our refusal, they invariably end up with a packet of obscene photographs, pulling aside their rags to let a corner peep out. We push them away indignantly, going so far as to call them by the name of the animal which their religion forbids them to eat. They under-

Port Said

stand us and burst into a waggish, knowing laugh, the significance of which, as we can clearly grasp, is: "The same to you." And on they come again undaunted.

The way to escape them is to go into one of the shops under the arcades, with their windows full of English books and English remedies against boredom or fever, sun-helmets, enlarged photographs, and advertisements of a famous insecticide. A Chinese of my acquaintance who is travelling third-class lost his spectacles on the very first evening. He sleeps in the upper bunk and before going to sleep put them down behind him on what he took for a shelf, though it was really only the space between two bulkheads, which would have to be knocked down before he could recover his glasses. He was told for his consolation that more than one thing had gone the same way before and never come back again. He related his misadventure with the good humour characteristic of his nation and approximating very closely to French gaiety; but the only organs of sight left him are two little black pearls squeezed in between his eyelids and obviously inadequate. I take pity on a misfortune which may equally well happen to myself, and promise him my assistance. The first shop where we explain our requirements is kept by some stiff but conscientious Germans. They have not got such a thing themselves, but know where it is to be found and give us a guide. He is a silent and magnificent black, with his fez tilted backwards at such an angle as to continue the curve of his face, his blue cotton robe floating out in a long bell-shaped line from his sturdy shoulders as he advances with a long, elastic stride with which we find some difficulty in keeping up.

While the optician, having grasped our explanations, is fitting the glasses to their frame, I go and stand outside the door, supposing myself safe from molestation in this out-of-the-way

Port Said

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alley. But an Arab appears carrying a basket-work tray of some trash or other for European savages, and addresses me in his Levantine *lingua franca* studded with French phrases. I remain imperturbable. He tries again, with no more success, using scraps of English, German, Italian, and even Russian, till he begins to lose patience. But now my companion appears and the vender murmurs: "Ah! Chinese!" And off he goes musing: another language to learn!

We are not so much molested on our return. There are some new arrivals who offer fresh prey, perhaps more vulnerable, for they are British, dressed in shorts like large school-boys on holiday. I have the joy of recognizing and saluting a Frenchwoman as I go by. We had only exchanged a few words in the dining-room that same morning on the subject of some strawberry jam. But we are "in the same boat." Never have I grasped the inner significance of the metaphor so well before.

On the promenade deck a dense crowd has gathered round an old juggler of whom I have heard before, for he is so famous that the regulations forbidding natives to come on board ship have been relaxed in his favour. Muffled in the folds of his burnous, he looks us up and down one after the other with his little tired eyes all the time his hands are at work. He spirits away two live chickens, then rises and finds them in the pocket of a spectator, who gives a flattered smile. He promises to light a cigarette by breathing on it, but this is only a trick to induce somebody to offer him one, and with the cigarette in his mouth he leaves us in the lurch, going off with his chickens, his harvest of five- and ten-franc notes, and, like the spoilt virtuoso he is, his disdain for the public.



## JIBUTI

The sun is a blaze of fire. One day it spread to the sea, for to reach our moorings we have to avoid the blackened wreck of a mail-boat exactly like our own, also belonging to the series called by the names of the French châteaux. It was the *Fontainebleau*, which ran aground in flames on this sandy reef four years ago in order to save its passengers and baggage. A few hours before reaching this port on its homeward voyage, the *Georges Philppar* caught fire recently and blazed like a torch. Is this the chosen resort of the spirits of fire? Or is the heat of the sun's rays in some way intensified here? The choice between these explanations is only a choice between two metaphors.

I do not like heat, but I can stand it, and on the way through the Red Sea I have never ceased to sleep peacefully in my cabin without seeking a little air on deck like other passengers, only to be disturbed at five o'clock in the morning by the cleaners. But I shall lose the bet which I made with one of the ship's officers that I would go on shore, for the white glare is blinding.

I am sorry for the nice young couple who are leaving us, the husband, a railway engineer, having got his first appointment on the line leading up from Jibuti to the plateaux of Ethiopia and serving the important trade with the land of Harrar, once explored by the ex-poet Arthur Rimbaud by easy stages with a caravan. "We are not accustomed to heat,"

## Jibuti

they remark. But they have come to the right place to grow accustomed to it, for it was long famous for the two palm-trees standing before the Governor's palace: they were the only trees in the whole region, and were made of zinc. Nowadays there is an irrigation system which, by concentrating the waters of the neighbouring springs, has replaced these by real palm-trees, besides making it possible to grow fruit and vegetables immediately outside the town. Beyond lie the desert and its nomads, who live by brigandage.

Huddled in his burnous, a Jewish or Arab trader squats by the bulwarks, watching his assistant on the other side of the corridor arranging the boxes of bathing-sandals, bead necklaces, and cotton stuffs. The latter is a Somali, copper-coloured and shapely, with an impassive face beneath thick hair reddened with quicklime. But others of his race, less proud than he, are disporting themselves in the foul water among cabbage-stumps, orange-peel, and shiny streaks of oil, ready to dive for a coin "into the sea": "*A la mér! A la mér!*"

A group has obtained permission to come on board and pose before a battery of cameras. With the tapering lines of their face and torso and their slender hips, they are like ancient Egyptian statues. I focus them with my camera from farther off, including also those who are photographing them. But one of the Somalis has caught sight of me and comes up to claim payment for his effigy.

I hear the merchant raising his voice. "You not miss, you madam!" he says as he rails against a very young and blushing passenger, whose only fault is that she found the price he asked too high for a pair of cracked rubber shoes which in Europe would have been fit for nothing but the ash-can.

Early in the afternoon we depart without regret from this land of which we have seen nothing but the shore and the

## Colombo

scum, beneath a pitiless sun in whose light we are conscious of the ultra-violet rays, and a sky whose blue is half haze with heat. This is the tropical sky which will weigh upon us solidly from here to Indo-China. The very clouds, when they appear, are not round or well defined as in our part of the world, but struggle with the rays that rend them to tatter and charge them with electricity, till they are frayed crumpled, and quivering with rage.

Through the depths of night we skirt a dark, precipitous coast, standing out against an uncertain brightness which soon becomes more definite: the rays of the lighthouse appear, bidding us farewell across the shoulder of the mountains, as the wheeling shaft sweeps across the sea. It is the Italians to whom sailors owe this useful signal at the tip of the African continent known as Cape Guardafui. They had no little difficulty in placing it there, for its warnings injure the principal industry of the tribes in those regions, which is that of pillaging wrecks and, when necessary, causing them.



## COLOMBO

This morning at Colombo I made a friend. His name is Abdul Samath, and, though a Moslem, he allowed me to photograph him, tying a handkerchief round his neck for the occasion over his open tunic. If it comes out well, I shall send him a print. I have his address, at the Hotel Thowfeek, proprietor Mr. S. A. Koya Marikar, 101 Wolfendahl Street. When you touch at this port you can ask for him there, pref-

## Colombo

erably in the kitchen, where he exercises his talents. He is a vigorous little man with a keen glance and a frank smile.

As a rule I refuse Ceylon tea, but in Ceylon one has to drink it. It was over two cups of this reddish beverage, sweetened with fresh cream, that we got to know each other more fully, in a modest first-storey restaurant in the native city, with its unglazed window looking out upon a sunlit expanse of tiled roofs and verdant palms. There we came to a halt after rather a long walk through streets where fat housewives were bargaining over vegetables, and tailors working their sewing-machines beneath the awnings of shops, while old men, sunk in their grey beards, sat meditating with crossed legs on the sidewalks. For some little time Abdul Samath had been walking at my side in step with me. As soon as he saw me pause, he asked me in good English what I was looking for.

This is how it came about that he took me round to see the fish-market, then a Hindu temple covered with gilded wood-carvings, and then a mosque where the doorkeeper asked me to take off my sun-helmet at the outside entrance. There was a courtyard to cross under a blazing sun. I made a half turn, under the amused eyes of my guide, who, himself bare-headed, said: "For our part, we do not mind the sun."

Brahminism is the national religion of the Aryans, whose language is akin to most of those current in Europe. It was they who conquered Hindustan in the days of antiquity, driving the indigenous tribes back into the mountains. Towards the sixth century before the Christian era, Buddhism, which is a reformed Brahminism, spread through the land, but was turned out of its country of origin in the long run and founded flourishing sects in Tibet, Cambodia, Mongolia, China, and Japan. Brahminism has been less fortunate with Islam, the in-

## Colombo

filtration of which it has failed to prevent. Since Islam is intolerant on principle and makes a virtue of fanaticism, the quarrels between the two religions often degenerate into bloody riots in the cities where they meet. But here manners are softened by the enervating climate and the bounty of nature. Hence Ceylon is one of the rare places in India where Buddhism has been able to hold its own.

I readily accepted the proposal that I should visit a pagoda belonging to this religion. As I entered the street-car I noticed that another man was accompanying us. Abdul Samath, being a Moslem, would have to remain at the door and had discreetly engaged a friend.

This time I took off my helmet at the door, and my shoes as well. A monk appeared, saluted us, and silently acted as our guide. The winding gallery opened on one side upon a shady garden, and on the other was decorated with frescoes having as their subject the story of the Buddha Sakyamuni: his sadness amid the pleasures of the court, his preaching, the miracle of the elephant which was thrown over a wall, and his peaceful death under two flowering trees—naïve paintings in crude pink and green, with no detail, a popular type of pictorial art in which pity, mildness, and resignation shine radiantly beneath the halo of a torrid calm. The gallery led to a sanctuary, in which the statue of the Master rose vague and gigantic amid the gloom, before a table on which the piety of the faithful had already laid the daily offering of grains of rice and cut flowers. The monk became absorbed in silent meditation, and I followed his example. A tin collection-box for offerings stood by the table, though at first I did not see it. I slipped an offering into it, at which the monk seemed agreeably surprised. He bowed his gratitude and handed me a large violet flower of that variety of water-lily

## Singapore

known as the lotus, which is a symbol of the Buddhist faith. I put it in a glass of water and kept it for a few days on the shelf in my cabin, despite the objections of the steward, an argumentative Provençal, who maintained that it smelt marshy and might give me fever. But it only wilted.



## SINGAPORE

The vibration of the ship has ceased. Through the porthole I can see the sunlit quay on which a crowd is gathered with its eyes fixed on us. Irregular footsteps beat out an unaccustomed rhythm overhead. Suddenly my name is called in the passage and I collide with the steward, who says there is a telegram for me. The head steward has it on his table near the main staircase, and will only deliver it to me in return for my receipt. During the short distance between my cabin and his table I have time and to spare for worrying.

But it is a false alarm and only intensifies my delight when I unfold the paper and read: "Expecting you with joy." This message, dated from Shanghai, is signed with two names which are very dear to me: Li Yü-ying and Su-mei Chêng.

I made the acquaintance of Mr. Li Yü-ying in Paris, in the very year when it was visited by the illustrious Suen Yi-sien, or, as it is pronounced in his native region of Canton, Sun Yat-sen. The Republic had not yet been proclaimed. Sun Yat-sen was travelling round the world asking help from his fellow-countrymen and sympathy from foreign diplomacy,

or at least strict neutrality towards the revolutionary movement of which he was the instigator. I shall never forget his face, like that of an apostle in its indomitable gentleness, the mouth receding a little beneath the scanty moustache, and a fold at the corner of the lips such as one sees on the statues of saints or bishops in our Gothic cathedrals.

Like him, Mr. Li had devoted his life to the liberation of his country. Born at Peking, of an ancient family which had furnished high officials to the Empire, he had renounced all the advantages by which he might have profited in his fortune and career, for the sake of carrying on an indefatigable propaganda abroad, reducing himself to poverty so as to place the small sum of which he was able to dispose at the service of the sacred cause. His delicate features seemed carved in ivory, so impassive did his face remain, but if he raised his eyelids it was lit up by a glance in whose sombre depths there glowed a flame. He spoke seldom and slowly, but always for the purpose of reiterating a conviction which admitted neither of doubt nor of reserve.

Miss Chêng Yü-hsiu, better known in Europe under the name by which she signed her book of reminiscences, Su-mei Chêng, comes, like Sun Yat-sen, from Canton. Her family is one of the leading ones in the province, and is deeply attached to tradition.

Having refused to marry the man for whom she had been destined, she had to make nine steps on her knees before her grandmother in order to obtain forgiveness for her disobedience. Affiliated with the revolutionary party, she was one of those intrepid young girls several of whom have expiated with their lives the acts of sedition which they have always loyally performed. She escaped, not without difficulty, from the Imperial police. Having taken refuge in Paris, she dazzled those



who approached her by her ardent grace. But she should be heard speaking. Her eloquence is irresistible. I have seen her reduce an audience in the great amphitheatre of the Sorbonne to tears by the emotion with which she proclaimed the brotherhood of humanity. And in conversation she knows how to blend a charming vivacity with the politeness of the great world.

After the un hoped-for success of the Chinese Revolution, all three of them returned to their country, Sun Yat-sen to refuse the presidency, Mr. Li to decline any but a consultative role, while Miss Chên, who is a Doctor of Laws, entered the magistrature only to leave it shortly afterwards, in her anxiety to preserve both the purity of her ideas and her liberty of thought. None of them was able to take part directly in the rough and tumble of public affairs, which always rather soils the hands. But it was they who inspired the new régime, and still do so. Sun Yat-sen was its saint, whose spirit still watches over it, though his body is in the tomb. Mr. Li is its philosophic prophet, and Miss Chên its fairy.

So I was warned that devoted friends were expecting me. I had felt no doubt of this, for they were friends of twenty years' standing, and Chinese friends at that. China is a land in which friendship is a virtue on the same level as filial, fraternal, and conjugal devotion. When Confucian morality assigned it a place among the five relationships by which two human beings may be united, this was no invention or innovation; it was merely lending the force of law to a natural feeling. The rites which it instituted are not stimulants, but restraints, which moderate a generosity of heart springing from a strong vitality of temperament, in order to prevent conflicts between rival affections. All those who have been able to put Chinese friendship to the test know its fidelity

## Singapore

and cordiality and the attentions in which it finds expression. I knew that no pains would be spared in China to make my stay there sweet.

Work had started in port. A squad of yellow-skinned men was hauling up the oil-pipes. A moving bridge was going backwards and forwards noiselessly on rails, enormous and docile. Beyond that was a bazaar where, in front of the wooden stalls, oranges and bananas, white shoes, straw hats, scarves, and many-coloured cotton stuffs lay in full sunshine. Loungers were pressing round a Hindu standing there motionless, whom I immediately recognized: it was Ratan Singh, Rajah of Chitor at the time of the Mogul invasion. But his reincarnation was manifold. Thirty paces to the left, thirty paces to the right, there he stood again, and beyond that at regular intervals, always facing me, with his sturdy form and head thrown proudly back, and with bushy black whiskers projecting beyond his muslin turban on either side of his coffee-coloured face. Every one of these Hindu policemen is the very image, repeated as though between a series of mirrors, of the tenor Franz at the Opéra in Roussel's *Padma-vati*, an illusion which is all to the credit of that great artist. Asia is a land of homogeneous forms of culture, in which nobility is at every man's disposal. The most humble artisan may, if he assumes the costume of a prince, take on his bearing too and become a caliph or grand vizier in a day, as in the stories in the *Thousand and One Nights*.

On the opposite bank, where there are no other craft on the water, our liner attracts the native boats, each of them containing a single man who seems to form one with it, for his body is squeezed tightly into the aperture in the top of his boat, which he steers with a short paddle, dipping it rapidly into the water to right and left, like the alternate movement

## Singapore

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of a fish's fins. Beardless, with high, cap-like turbans and glossy golden skin, they are Malays who have come, perhaps, from that village built on piles whose thatched roofs can be seen resting on the sea off the shore. They have nothing to sell and take no notice of us, being occupied with a tennis-ball thrown away by some British crew, scooping it up from the surface of the water and hitting it to and fro between them, using their paddles as rackets. Two of them are particularly skilful and challenge each other with smiles that show their cruel white teeth. One of them takes advantage of the moment when his adversary has his back turned to bounce the ball off the nape of his neck, but he does not take him unawares, for by bending slightly the other one manages to roll it on to his shoulder, from which it trickles gently down his arm to his wrist, and from thence, without a wobble, to the wooden blade, which drives it with a smart blow in an unexpected direction. Where will it fall? While our eyes follow its flight, a few strokes of the paddle, now restored to its natural functions, suffice to bring up the light canoe just in time to hit the ball; and so the game goes on.

A passenger who speaks a little of the native language asks to have a ball shot at him, and it is hit straight to the promenade deck, but slips from his hand, which closes on it too slowly. The Malays laugh at him, their snub-nosed faces still broader for their grins. They stay there idly all the morning, asking neither alms nor pay, having come simply for their own pleasure, out of a taste for company, and disporting themselves between sun and water just as one sometimes sees bands of porpoises or dolphins escorting a ship, and gambolling all round it in their play.

On leaving we turn away from the quay to skirt the opposite shore. The marshy valley in which the Malay village ends

Saigon

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is dominated by a hill of which Europeans have taken possession, with their veranda'd villas under shady trees, their sanded paths and lawns. But now, in the depths of a bay, there appears a little wooden house surrounded by a palisade, which is prolonged into the sea to form an enclosure, a necessary precaution against sharks in these waters. A young woman in an elegant, closely-fitting bathing-suit opens the gate, dives into the water, sees us, waves her hand gaily, and dives again. But what if there were a gap in the palisade? No such idea occurs to the thoughtless beauty.



## SAIGON

Cape St. Jacques, which we approach in the morning, is no more to me than a shadowy promontory to the eastward. But my fellow-countrymen, almost all of whom have appointments in Indo-China, see it rising before them as an alarm signal, for there they are to hear the decisions arrived at with regard to them in their absence, and these usually cause more discontent than happiness. A wise administration sends them this news with its messages of welcome, like a pill before breakfast. By the stroke of four, when they land at Saigon, they will have digested it.

The engines have stopped, the Government launch leaves the shore and approaches us, and impatient heads are craned over the side, scanning it searchingly, as though to read the expected message through the side. There is an oppressive silence. When the barman appears at last with the yellow

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envelopes, he is greeted with a murmur of relief, and everybody stands marking time in a row extending as far as the tables in the bar, where the envelopes will be distributed. It reminds me of the examinations at the Sorbonne and the pack of candidates following at the heels of the usher when he appeared to post up the list of successful candidates. We in Europe used to laugh at the examinations for the selection of officials in China under the old régime and at their sixty-year-old students. But are not we, too, perpetual candidates for advancement or honours, up to that age and even beyond, without even the guarantee afforded by examinations?

First the civilians step forward, with forced smiles whose incognito I respect. The soldiers are still standing crowded together round the table, where their commandant is finishing reading out a long telegram. The battalion which sailed from Marseilles is to land at Tourane and go into cantonments at Vinh. "We shall have plenty to do," it says. "I rely upon you." Two officers appointed to a particularly difficult station receive his compliments. Thus this excellent commanding officer manages to prevent recriminations by an appeal for devotion and courage which will not fail to rouse an echo in their hearts. A captain who did not know till now to what corps he was to be attached joins the battalion, with the result that the youngest sub-lieutenant has to go, for otherwise he would be a supernumerary. His brother-officers protest vigorously, out of loyalty, and accusations of intrigue are heard. But he takes over the command of his company, and shows qualities of orderliness, care, and authority which are at once appreciated. Three days later the commandant will have declared him to be a good officer, and all grudges will be forgotten. What a fortunate profession, in which a man can prove his worth in broad daylight!

Saigon

Resuming our journey, we proceed up the muddy stream, wide-spread between its shores, so flat that they would be indistinguishable from the water were it not for their fringe of livid bushes. The rectangular patches of mud beyond are rice-fields, where rows of squatting labourers are transplanting the young plants. In a corner stands the mud hut in which they seek shelter at nightfall like an insect in its hole. But that two-storeyed stone house with two banyan-trees standing sentinel before its door and fanning it with their leaves is the residence of the Chinese grocer, who makes a fortune by selling them the necessary condiments for cooking the rice and fish which form their meagre diet.

The dusty quay, the greyish buildings—even the tables of the little café in the narrow strip of shade cast by a high wall—all remind one so strongly of France that the rickshaw-men who run up and compete for my custom seem foreign to the scene, as though they had been brought here to produce a picturesque effect in some colonial exhibition at home. The rue Catinat with its arcades peopled with florists', photographers', and hairdressers' shops might almost be mistaken for Marseilles. But the broad avenues beyond, shaded by tall trees and leading to the Governor's palace, have an Asiatic majesty. The road to Cholon, the Chinese quarter some miles away, is also planted with trees, as in France and China, but, the people are admitted to it and profit by the shade to set up their rag-sellers' booths, fruit-stalls, or open-air fried-fish stoves on every path. A crowd of petty traders, as crowded and animated, as busy and hard-working as an ant-hill.

I linger till late in the evening with a wise friend of mine, talking about the occult sciences and ancient religions of Asia till an advanced hour, and feel a little uneasy about my return to the harbour, though my host reassures me. He turns

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out to be right. I have hardly crossed the threshold before two rickshaw-men emerge from the shadows in which they have been lurking, like our cabs at night in the old days, but more numerous and pleasant-tempered. The one I choose thanks me with a smile and trots along with a long stride which heightens the freshness of the light breeze. As happens almost daily at this season, a storm at sunset has relieved the heat. This is the hour of deliverance after an oppressive day, when one drinks in great draughts of health-giving repose. The streets are as deserted as in a provincial town when good citizens have gone to bed.

And it is indeed a provincial town for the French people who live there, for they have not omitted to bring with them their little store of jealousy and backbiting. Many find the climate hard to bear because they drink too much alcohol. They vent their ill-humour on their subordinates, whom they treat harshly, their equals, whose reputations they tear to pieces, their chiefs, whom they obey grudgingly, and the Government, which is responsible for all their ills. At the moment they are exasperated by what they call "the crisis." A little while ago the prices of rubber and certain other colonial products never stopped rising. It was enough to risk a little money to be sure of a profit. But the luck has changed and nobody likes losing. Everybody whom chance has favoured in the past takes himself for a financial genius who has a right to be protected and saved.

In former days people used to go to Indo-China to settle there. But since the bad example set by these fortunes made in a day, they have come only with the object of amassing a great pile of bank-notes as rapidly as possible and spending them in France. The young officials hardly think of anything but this happy return. As for the soldiers, the regulations

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oblige them, with a few favoured exceptions, to make way after two years and a half, so that everybody in turn may profit by colonial service, though it offers no advantages but the pay and allowances. But these mistakes are being rectified. The study of the native languages is prescribed or recommended, as the case may be. But the harm has been done. Most Frenchmen of the younger generation talk to nobody but their servants, whom they call "boy" in the English fashion, or else to interpreters, and on the strength of this limited experience they form their opinions on a complex and ancient society consisting of both rich and poor, nobles and peasants, tradesmen, artists, and officials.

Every class has its own troubles. In many regions bad harvests are causing want. The rice trade is in a bad way, for China, Indo-China's chief customer, is impoverished by war and the depreciation of its silver currency. The Annamites employed in the administration receive salaries greatly inferior to those of the French. Primary education is inadequate, and secondary education available only as a rare favour. Higher education is only to be had in France. The students who return after enjoying it are indignant at the difference between that land, where they are treated as equals, and the colony, where they are held at arm's length. Taxation falls heavily upon everybody, and they are not spared humiliations.

Hence they have cause for complaint. And the strange, the astonishing, the revolting thing, unheard-of in the past, is that they actually do complain. They endured far worse trials under their emperor in the days before the French administration: the exactions of the mandarins, a pitiless system of justice, devastating wars, and piracy even in times of peace. They simply bowed before the storm and let it pass

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over them, with the hereditary patience which the classic morality of China, adopted by them for centuries past, had only succeeded in increasing. Yet now they rise up and complain. What, then, has happened? Our education, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, republican ideas—all these are held responsible.

But these are only sufficient to explain the agitation of a select few, whereas the whole country is murmuring, even in the remoter parts of the interior, where agitators of more or less Communist views are collecting processions of villagers on the high roads who raise the cry of famine and call for justice.

One is more inclined, however, to believe in the contagious influence of personal example. In recent years the French colonists and officials have produced a stormy atmosphere by their discontent. Everybody has contributed towards it, till the storm-clouds have piled up and now overspread the whole land. French colonization has accomplished the miracle of making the Annamites almost as cantankerous as the French.

And amid this chorus of contradictory complaints the government of Indo-China has to be carried on. How is a man to distinguish his way clearly or avoid being deafened by the din? Beyond the grille at the end of the avenue, in the park with its trees, lawns, and masses of flowers stands the white palace, surrounded by a deceptive silence which is powerless to check the telephone messages, the official reports, telegrams and conferences, the visits of officials and the petitioners who have to be listened to. M. Pasquier receives me, smiling kindly through his grey beard, and questions me about my travels. He darts a keen glance at me through his eye-glasses, but his brow does not relax the wrinkles scored in it by care.

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I am conscious that his mind is still buzzing with the messages, replies, and conversations of the day, and refer only in general terms to the great affairs with which he is preoccupied. It would be lacking in courtesy to make no allusion to them, but indiscreet to ask any definite questions.

An hour later I rejoin him at his table, where he has done me the honour of inviting me to join the inner band of those who work with him. He seems happy to lay aside his burden and allow his mind to wander freely outside his official residence, through the country which stretches away all round it, from which he garners reminiscences for me like a good gardener who is proud of his flowers. He has been cultivating this garden for the last thirty years. With watchful diligence he grafts, prunes, and stakes, according to the nature of the soil and the strength of the human plant, from the marshes of Cambodia to the mountains of Laos, varying the seed and the manure when he passes from commercial Cochin China to literary Annam, still dominated by the august monuments of the past, or Tonkin, in which its defensive position on the frontier tends to foster the military virtues. Speaking the Annamite language fluently, he has been able to keep in touch with both traders and farmers in these three provinces, to question the school-children, and listen to the grievances of notables, village headmen, and fathers of families, with all of whom he is on terms of confidence.

I accompany him on this tour, leaving Saigon, an opulent but frivolous city without a past, to enjoy the peace of the country districts and their patriarchal frugality, or to seat myself, after a smiling greeting, in an armchair adorned with open-work carving in the well-shaded abode of a scholar. He knows what consideration is due to an intelligent and subtle

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people, whose civilization has hitherto attached more importance to the arts and mortality than to the study of figures or mechanics. Such, too, was the spirit of our own civilization before the Renaissance, with its geometrical spirit. The Greeks, who invented geometry, used it only with moderation. But we have wantonly squandered it, like savages with a cask of brandy.

Himself descended from an ancient race—for he is a Provençal—the Governor knows how to preserve a judicious point of view. "We observe the laws of perspective," he remarks. "It is merely a matter of convention. Our view is not that seen through a photographic lens." A painter himself, he talks of art like a connoisseur, but modestly refuses to show his landscapes. "I am a mere dauber," he says. He is musical, and tells me how much he misses the symphony concerts. Phonograph records cannot take their place. At first each gives an illusion of life, but it is only an illusion which fades when one returns to it, always to find the same presentation, with exactly the same details. Just as one never bathes twice in the same stream, so one never hears the same tune twice: between each hearing the universe has changed, and the music with it. If one isolates a single moment in time and deprives it of motion, it congeals into rigidity and dies.

Cambodia has a symphonic orchestra all its own, with a rich and living harmony, Laos its pan-pipes and village dances, Annam its popular songs, with their delicate grace. All these peoples are musical, and from what he has heard of the school bands which have been formed in only a few years, M. Pasquier has had proof of the ease with which they can handle European instruments. This is a branch of instruction which still remains to be organized, like the deco-

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rative arts, which are developing existing traditions with unbroken continuity and are already yielding appreciable results.

But there are other and more pressing questions. The first necessity is to live, and to live in peace. But this is a mere pittance, not a life: it is merely not dying. For mankind life means self-knowledge and self-expression.

Civilization is distinguished from barbarism by the fact that it produces ideas and works. There is no human society, however primitive it may be considered, without some degree of civilization. Almost all the peoples of this land already possess quite an advanced one. And for this reason there is a great demand for intellectual development.

Monsieur Pasquier is a humanist Governor. To be a humanist means to be humane, not only by nature but also by culture, with a due realization of cause and effect. It is impossible not to congratulate Indo-China upon the choice of its Governor, especially since, as I have so long repeated, a land educated on the Chinese system is easily governed by one who shows himself worthy to teach it.

Iced drinks have been brought in and it is growing late. As he takes his last few puffs at his homely pipe, my host apologizes for leaving me, for tomorrow he will once more have to take up his task of patient navigation, avoiding shoals and tacking against contrary winds, while never losing sight of his goal, which still seems so remote, but which he will reach in the end. He hands me over to the other three guests, all of whom are attached to his secretariate, Commandant Revoil, Lieutenant Brousseaux, and his secretary Thiollier, trusting these young fellows to act as my guides. We have hardly entered the motor-car before all three of them speak highly of their chief and his kindliness and delicacy. This

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does not surprise me at all. Short though my time has been, it has been long enough for me to have experience of his tact. He is one of those who know how to find the true ring of a character with a mere touch. He "recognizes its note," to use a Chinese expression used in speaking of friendship.

Passing through the suburbs, we drive on to Cholon beneath the tall lamp-posts. This is the Chinese city, where life is more expansive, jollier, and more a-quiver with animation. Up till now the Annamites have not advanced beyond petty trade. Those of them who have ventured upon more extensive enterprises have soon been ousted by the Chinese, for they do not possess the same zeal, economy, or rigid probity, not to speak of the solidarity which causes the Chinese to form associations, or, as they are called here, "congregations" of traders, with a common fund which bolsters up individual failures, as happens in France in the stockbrokers' associations or the "chamber of notaries"—institutions of a type rare in France, and hardly existing except for these two honourable bodies. A Chinese who plies a trade outside his own country almost always succeeds in growing rich. One of those in Cholon, whose fortune now amounts to millions of piastres, arrived there without a penny, as a coolie, or hired labourer. He owes his profits to the rice crop of Indo-China, the milling and export of which are almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese.

But after spending the day in their offices, factories, or warehouses, these hard workers still have some strength to spare for this animated night life. I am told that it has greatly decreased since the fall in prices. But it is hard to imagine how it could be greater. In the brilliantly illuminated streets the crowds overflow from the sidewalks on to the roadway, scarcely troubling to make way for vehicles, which have to

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slow down. The restaurants are thronged with people playing at Chinese dominoes—known as *ma-tsiao*, or sparrows, and in Europe as “mah-jong”—unless they prefer to drink tea in pleasant society. Every place is occupied in the opium-shops, which are to be found at every other house, in numbers comparable to those of wine-shops in France, and bearing on a copper plate the official stamp: *R. O. (Régie de l'opium, or Government Monopoly of Opium)*. Smokers too poor to possess a supply of their own smoke what they obtain on the spot, curled up in the narrow space provided on the wooden bench along the wall. Pipe and lamp are provided free, but not the few drops of black syrup in the concave lid of an old Régie tin. Nobody says a word, but each pursues his own thoughts, too happy at his precarious and dearly bought deliverance to let any of it percolate through to the exterior.

Though the performance at the theatre has started long ago, there is still a large crowd at the door. The man at the box-office will only communicate with us by signs, with a disdainful smile at my efforts after a correct pronunciation. I console myself with the thought that he is probably from Canton and does not understand the language of the north, which is what I speak. But I am not so sure of this as I should like to be. In the end we obtain a box behind the benches, the audience seated on which takes no further notice of our existence after a hasty glance. It is a romantic play, to judge, at least, from the title posted up on a placard on either side of the stage: *Tears Drop by Drop*. Here is the ingénue with her clear voice and modest little gestures, the leading juvenile, a scholar with a little pointed black beard, and the “heavy father” with his broad shoulders. It is impossible to catch the words, for they are drowned by the music of the two-stringed violin and the piercing hautboy, or broken at regular intervals

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by the deafening clash of cymbals, which accentuate the strong beats and call forth an answering clatter from the wooden rattle. It is to be supposed that the audience know the play by heart, for most of them are gazing fixedly and attentively at the stage. A few, however, sit with closed eyes and head thrown back, while others remain glued to the spot, without moving so much as an eyelid or even following the actors, being plunged by the tumult and brilliance of the performance into a trance-like state in which they lose all consciousness of self and verge upon a state of bliss.



## HONG-KONG

I woke badly this morning. As I rose from the depths, I grasped at a flabby dream and brought it to the surface whether I would or no. Impossible to get rid of it. During my bath, in the dining-room, and on the promenade deck, scraps of it still clung to me. I dreamt that I had returned home and seen my family once more. We gazed at one another sadly; I had managed to escape only for a few moments and had to leave again. I felt all the while that it was unreal, but I would not admit it. This glimmering of reason in a deceptive twilight, this phantom illusion fill me with pain and remorse.

The grey sky reminds one of Europe, and the precipitous coast before us, clad in sombre foliage beneath its cap of cotton-wool clouds, does so still more. Here are the suburbs adjoining the roadstead thronged with grey junks; next comes

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the outer boulevard, where ferry-boats ply between one shore and the other, the commercial quarter with its black cargo-boats, past which we advance in search of our berth farther on among the liners towering four and five storeys high above the sea. The waterways are broad, but crowded by those which have berthed before us on either side, close enough together to touch one another. Where are we going? I had not noticed that free space behind a jetty. The boat advances and projects beyond it by exactly half her length. Having got so far, she lies pivoted on the stone corner like the beam of a balance on its upright, then rights herself by such a skilful manœuvre that she still has sufficient space for safety. She does not even graze the hempen fenders which had been lowered in case of need. The ladder has hardly been placed against the open port before a perfect cascade of Chinese pours down it. These are passengers who came on board at Saigon, all southern Chinese, mostly from Canton. Families meet on the quay and walk slowly towards the exit at a leisurely pace, once they are rid of their bags and bundles, which they have set down on the ground for the porters to take charge of. The young women in their blue silk trousers chatter gaily beneath their sunshades, which they tilt a little sideways, darting mocking glances at the ship, from which they know themselves to be observed. Then they drop their eyes again at once to look at a group of little children stumbling hand-in-hand over the mooring chains before them. We should not be misled by their slender busts and supple figures or by their gait, which, though languid, is no longer deformed by the long extinct fashion of binding the feet, nor should their coquettish ways deceive us: they are mothers of families. In Europe, with rare exceptions, a leisured existence is necessary if feminine grace is to survive the trying effects of repeated mother-

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hood. But these are wives of small tradesmen, who have few servants and have nursed their children themselves.

I recall a charming story of eighteenth-century China, a period with a tinge of libertinism and scepticism in many ways resembling the same one in France. It tells of a woman who is in despair because in her own home her husband prefers a "little wife." A sympathetic friend brings her a mirror and teaches her to smile, which charms the faithless husband so much that he returns to his first love. This promiscuity offends our ideas of decency. Chinese morality does not approve of it, but tolerates it, on the ground that too much should not be expected of human weakness. Adultery, which for the last hundred years has furnished the subject of almost all French novels and all French comedies, is held far more blameworthy in China, as causing division in the home. Under the influence of European ideas, monogamy is coming to be strictly observed nowadays in the most educated classes of Chinese society. Is it fear of a rival that keeps these pretty middle-class wives of southern China still ready to defend themselves at an age and in a walk of life in which their Gascon or Provençal sisters are for the most part nothing but portly matrons or good-natured gossips?

Hong-kong: in the language of the country the name signifies "the sweet-scented arm of the river." The stream whose estuary widens out and forms a gulf comes down from Canton, a rich city which is reached in a few hours by train or boat. But Hong-kong has a note of sadness to the Chinese ear, like the first sound of an alarm-bell. After a war the memory of which little children are taught at school to detest, and known only too justly as the "opium war," the island which encloses the roadstead was ceded to England on August 29, 1842, by a treaty signed at Nankin, thus opening the long

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series of "unequal treaties" which are so painful to modern Chinese patriotism. It was, indeed, in order to defend the contraband trade in this Indian product in opposition to the viceroy of the province, who wished to forbid it, that British squadrons were sent into the China seas in 1840 and 1841. The first advanced to within sight of Canton, the second took possession of the ports of Ning-po, Wusung, and Shanghai, in spite of a courageous resistance which, thanks to the enormous superiority of British armaments, made their victory a mere slaughter. The treaty further stipulated for freedom for European trade in the ports of Fuchow, Amoy, Ning-po, and Shanghai. Such was the origin, for which there is surely little to be said, of what are nowadays known as the "European concessions" in several cities of China, and their extraterritorial privileges.

The few passengers who are proceeding farther have also gone on shore. I know where they are going. The little guide told off to conduct us every time we touch at a port vaunts the steep streets in which the rich European lolls in a palanquin, and the funicular which enables tourists with little time or money to scan the whole horizon from the summit. From here I can see the houses rising one above the other behind a curtain of trees, till the topmost ones, rising above the summit, seem suspended in the sky. I divine the concealed redoubts and the cannon threateningly commanding coast and sea under cover of the casemates. Banks, cottages, fortresses, such in brief is the program of British imperialism in the nineteenth century. The East India Company raised an army to protect its factories. The Government which succeeded to its affairs recruits soldiers to guard the ways of communication through which pass the cotton stuffs of Manchester and the

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hardware of Sheffield. Smelting-furnaces and spindles work for the whole world. Near the populous cities and busy markets travelling salesmen await their goods in entrenched camps. Utility above all things. This port has a sheltered position, this island has fresh water, this strait can open or close a great sea-route. So England takes possession of it, with no precaution save that of sweeping away the former occupants first so as to find the spot vacant before settling upon it. A concert of recriminations goes up against its brutality, arrogance, and perfidy. England does not flinch. Detached from the Continent, she believes herself impregnable in her great island, of whose splendid isolation her statesmen have boasted, and as mistress of the seas she enriches herself at the expense of the other nations, as did the Roman Empire in former days, but by methods suited to the age of steam, telegraphs, and bank-notes.

The herb which cures masons is fatal to carpenters. Imperialism, like parliamentarism, free trade, and a few other panaceas of the nineteenth century, causes fever in the twentieth. The ill having once been diagnosed, England has begun to seek the remedy.

In Egypt, in Ireland, in Canada, in India, everywhere she is relaxing her grasp, in order to lessen the tension of men's minds. Yet, though sincere and courageous, she is only treating the symptoms, and the evil, having deeper causes than these, may become dangerous at any moment.

I am alone on deck with a man who is selling picture post-cards and trying to catch my eye, and another, a little farther off, who has just finished arranging a suite of wicker arm-chairs, tables, and sofas made in Manila. I wait impatiently for the end of the shower that is falling, so that I may dash

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their illusions. But I shall not take a walk through the European quarter. That which threatens ruin has no interest for me.

Picking my way among puddles and squads of workmen hauling iron girders, I reach the exit, passing along by the warehouses and, having refused the rickshaw-men, harnessed to their two-wheeled carriages, who wait in a row along the curb like our cabs, I find myself in a broad, crowded street. It is the Chinese quarter on the shore of the mainland, known as Chiu Lung, the Nine Dragons.

Foot-passengers, automobiles, and push-carts mingle on the muddy roadway and avoid one another without a collision, gliding past like fish in a pool. On the sidewalks the stream of humanity eddies round the pillars of the arcades, thanks to whose protection the shops dispense with windows. But for the various shop-signs which hang in streamers from the roof, one would take them for different counters in the same shop. Here they sell shiny pastries, there bicycles, cigarettes, fragrant camphor-wood boxes of all sizes, the smallest a jewel-box and the largest an elegant coffin. A barber with a little sponge on the end of a stick stands on the threshold in order to have more light while he attends to the ear of a jovial goodwife who responds to the chaff of the waiting customers without moving her head. A pharmacy with its boxes of powders and herbal remedies attracts attention by a placard posted up against a pillar, giving the name of the doctor who is writing his prescriptions at the back of the shop.

In front of a restaurant on a little space, open all round like a market, customers who have failed to find seats hastily empty their smoking bowl of rice with their chopsticks, while housewives surround the basket of a market-woman who

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stands on the pavement selling local produce, a sort of green pods the price of which is marked, but only by a figure. I am too ignorant to venture to approach, so I continue my walk. People draw aside when necessary to let me pass, but without word or look. Yet when I stop and buy a package of tobacco, I am observed by a few passers-by, curious to see how I shall manage. I do not understand the local dialect and can only manage to explain myself to the shopkeeper by signs, as he stands silent beside his goods like a fisherman when the fish begins to bite.

I have already made my choice when a young workman in breeches and a short blouse approaches; he points out a package with more in it, and places it in my hands in spite of the shopkeeper, who protests a little, but soon calms down and resumes his affable smile. I look round for my defender in order to thank him, but he is already lost in the crowd. He has come to my assistance spontaneously, impelled by his honest instincts. To this stranger, whom I could not recognize even if I were to meet him again one day, I owe a few scraps of tobacco, but, more than that, a gleam of friendship which shines through my sadness and brings me once more into touch with humanity. The stream goes by, but I am no longer alone. I return thanks to the land of the nine dragons for its friendly welcome.

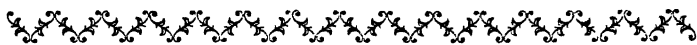


# *PICTURES*









## *AN EVENING AT SHANGHAI*

We are an interminable time arriving at Shanghai, going on and on up the muddy stream, one bank of which is lost in the white light on the horizon. The other, a short distance away, protects its rice-fields of a watery green by the grey shade of willows like those of the river Doubs, near my own village. All the passengers are on deck, dressed up in readiness to land, at a loose end, and out of humour because of the customs declaration which the head steward has compelled them with some difficulty to fill out. They took offence at this still recent claim on the part of China to examine baggage introduced into its territory, as has long since been done everywhere else, regarding it as an outrage upon their dignity as Europeans, who stand above the laws of Asia. "This cannot last," said some. "This is not the way to stop smuggling," remarked others.

Criss-cross rows of pylons connected by a network of wires, like one of those spider's webs woven between the stalks of damp meadow-grass: it is a wireless-telegraph station, one of the most powerful in the whole world. The edge of the sky where it rests upon the earth is streaked with trails of smoke or hidden behind massive gas or gasoline reservoirs. The shores draw closer, we keep passing brown-sailed junks, cargo-boats, tugs, and passenger-boats plying on the river, looking like racks for drying linen with their tiers of decks running from stem to stern. The sinking sun bathes its reflection in the

## *An Evening at Shanghai*

reddened water when the ship comes to a stop off the quay at which a place awaits it. In the custom-house a crowd is massed behind counters and barrier. Arms are waved. I catch my name as it flies through the air and recognize two friends who have come to meet me, one French and the other Chinese. But drawing alongside is a long process. Since we cannot move either forwards or backwards, it has been necessary to throw two cables on shore and slowly haul in the enormous mass. Night has fallen when, having had my passport examined and said good-bye, I hope forgetting nobody, I at last step on to the paved quay, accompanied by an elderly porter with a face scored with deep wrinkles and crinkled into a helpful and solicitous expression. Accompanied by him, I go and identify my trunk at the foot of an electric-light standard, and we are pleased with each other because we can manage to make ourselves mutually understood. But I have still to face that brisk, unresponsive customs official in a military dolman, who seemed to give a slight shrug of the shoulders when I failed to find my baggage-ticket immediately. In my confusion I forget to undo one of the locks of my suit-case, and it refuses to open; he takes pity on me, does not insist upon my opening it, and allows me to pass on into the street, where two motors are waiting in readiness. I am placed in one of them with part of my luggage; the rest is to follow.

Time presses, for we have to drive diagonally across the city from one side to the other, almost as far as from Grenelle to Ménilmontant, and still find a few minutes to change into a dinner-jacket at the house of the French friend who is putting me up half-way across. Tall stone houses, interminable avenues, the creaking of street-cars, the moving lights of vehicles.

Suddenly, just as silence falls in a concert-hall at the first touch of the bow, this crude tumult is abruptly succeeded by

## An Evening at Shanghai

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the tranquil splendour of a Chinese entertainment. The opening of these folding doors reveals a better transformation scene than does the curtain in a theatre. A vast gilded hall, with lustres in which the light of the electric lamps glances in broken gleams from the crystal drops. Rows of tables await the guests, with their blue and pink plates, their engraved cups and ivory chopsticks. "How late you have arrived! Did you get my telegram at Singapore?"

With sure and rapid step she precedes me, her eyes shining with joy, intelligence, and energy. "Do you know, I have not slept for a week for thinking of it?" She smiles at her old friend, introduces him in flattering terms, without leaving him time to protest, to the other guests—ministers, generals, diplomatists, standing upright in their silken robes. They bend their heads in a friendly salute which at once sets me at ease. I utter the conventional compliment, stressing the accented syllable strongly: "*Chiu yang, chiu yang*," which means: "For long past I have lifted up my eyes," or, in our less metaphorical language: "I have been desiring the honour of making your acquaintance." She looks proudly at me. They observe me with kindly eyes.

This swallows'-nest soup is exquisite. Never, perhaps, have I tasted one in which the fine white seaweeds were more transparent or lay so softly in their warm bath. The savour of an unseen ocean, whose presence is only divined from a gleam on the horizon, a light, unctuous liquid, lingering like a caress upon the tongue, a faint flavour, with the barest touch of salt, which at first seems insipid. But in Chinese this word has no derogatory sense, for it signifies the neutrality of that perfect balance only attained by superior skill, into which the artist may introduce a tone which would be imperceptible anywhere else, as on the white silk of a painting. "Flowers

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which are not flowers, clouds which are not clouds." To these two verses by one of the most sensitive of Chinese poets I should like to add another: "A flavour which is not a flavour." I try to explain all this to my neighbour, quite a young girl with a pensive child's face, who requites my politeness by telling me of her fondness for our symbolists, and inquiring whether, like her, I do not prefer Rimbaud's verses to Laforgue's for their music.

My other neighbour is the Minister of Public Instruction. In accordance with Chinese custom, by which this attention is considered a mark of friendship, he selects a fine bunch of shark's fins for my plate, for I enjoy their gelatinous crispness and their brown sauce, like that of some marine game, while another guest, a little farther away, raises his cup to the level of his eyes, inviting me to empty mine at the same time as he does his, with the words: "*Kan pei?*" It is about as large as a thimble, but the manservant waiting at table takes care that it is always full, inclining the spout of the enamelled copper ewer in which the rice-wine is kept warm. It is a spirit whose aroma recalls that of our old French *marc*, distilled from grape-skins, but with an added sharpness. I should very much like to know what it is that the sturdy old man opposite me, with a glance as piercing as a sword, is relating so animatedly. He is a Shanghai millionaire, a powerful business man for whom nobody else is a match. I can understand what he is saying: he is enthusiastically describing a rare flower which he has just acquired for his gardens.

On the lawn where coffee is served, chairs and seats are arranged facing a flight of steps, on which appear two princesses of olden days, glistening in their silks beneath the electric lights. One of them bows her head crowned by the diadem of a court lady under the Ming dynasty, rising in tier

## An Evening at Shanghai

upon tier of flowers; the other's proud head bears the high tiara and robe with straight folds which are the Manchu costume. She descends the steps, approaches me, and expresses her anxiety with unvarying friendliness, for the wind is freshening and stirring the leaves. "You will catch cold," she says; "we must go in."

The room has already been cleared of its tables. The Chinese princess advances with a timid, submissive, exquisite grace, flushed with emotion even more than with rouge, her downcast eyes hiding all but a slender crescent of her keen eyes. A hidden musician plays on the two-stringed violin, with its clear, even tone, tracing the outline of the melody which she accompanies in a voice quivering with consummate art as she utters a broken lament. Impersonating the heroine of a celebrated drama, condemned for a crime which she has not committed, she makes no attempt to prevail upon fate, but remains bewildered and terrified at seeing it so cruel. She is the charming wife of an eminent statesman who represents the Chinese Republic at the court of The Hague.

After her a child takes her place before the amused audience. She is seven years old, with swift gestures and a laughing voice, but she already knows how to give an impression of the vocalises, the *portamento*, and the brilliant trills by which sobs, sighs, outcries, and murmurs are expressed in this music.

"She is my niece," says the other lady. "Soon we shall send her to France for her education." Having paused a moment near me, she flits away, swerving lightly towards this guest and that, a solicitous hostess who seems to hover as though on wings.



## AT A RESTAURANT

"You were in the cave of the Forty Thieves yesterday evening." At this moment a hideous din breaks out in the adjoining room, most opportunely drowning my voice as I open my mouth to reply. This hard, decided tone which penetrates through the partition and deafens us is one which I had already heard at Cholon: that of a small hautboy into which the player breathes as hard as he can, somewhat like the instrument known in Brittany as a "*bombarde*," quite as piercing but less vibrant, a foreign instrument—Turkish, Arab, or Mongol—adopted some centuries ago by the whole of China for the popular theatre and for festive occasions.

One of our party, who has gone to investigate, comes back with a gesture of discouragement, and shouts, making a funnel of his hand so that his voice may carry to the far end of the table: "It's no use! It is a wedding banquet—and they are Cantonese." There is nothing to do but eat and drink in silence, but we shall enjoy the bill of fare all the better, and it promises to be worthy of serious interest. The restaurant has a most unpretentious appearance, and foreigners hardly ever go to it. But the Chinese friend whose guests we are knows the good places where his fellow-countrymen meet together. When he called on me this morning, I had not heard what had become of him during the twenty years which had elapsed since he left Paris. In the meantime he has been a provincial administrator, secretary general to one of the

## *At a Restaurant*

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provincial governments, a professor, and a journalist and has frequently been without a post, though he has a wife and two children. He is now employed by a telegraph agency. Cordial and jolly as ever, he talks good-humouredly about his vicissitudes, smoking large cigars from morning to night; but the smell of opium nauseates him, and so he is deprived of that other pleasure.

The other guests are journalists, for the most part European, and it is one of these who is waiting for my answer, and will wait a long time for it. Does he imagine I am unaware of the evil reports in circulation about the politicians of the Chinese Republic? To hear them, one might think one was in France. With the exception of two or three, whose integrity is always being stressed in order to shame the others, there is not a minister who is not accused of venality, not an official who is not reputed to be incompetent, unscrupulous, and sunk in vice, not a general who is not called an old dodderer or a traitor. I will not go so far as to maintain that there is not an element of truth in these imputations. Mankind is not perfect. Self-abnegation is the portion of the elect alone. Others cannot always lose sight of their interests or control their passions. Robespierre won the name of the Incorruptible to distinguish him from the other leaders of the French Revolution. And according to some historians, it is not even certain that the nickname was deserved.

In every land in the world politics is a game at which cheating prevails. In France and in China this is said to be more the case than in other countries, for they are the lands of conversation, where people enjoy being witty at the expense of their neighbours. The difference is that in China these conversations find a hearing and are transmitted to the rest of the world, amplified and distorted, as though through a

At a Restaurant

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loud-speaker, by the foreign colonies, strident with ignorance and pride. Backbiting is a polite pastime among people of similar culture, who know how much talk is worth. But it is not suited for export.

The hautboy continues without a pause, drilling its way into our consciousness. Our invisible neighbours at the wedding cannot get a word in any more than we can. Silently they intoxicate themselves with noise. These southern Chinese, unlike the people of the south of France, do not make it themselves, but order it of a competent performer who gives them their money's worth. The crash of brass which rends the air draws swarms of listeners, like bees attracted by some aerial honey. In Darius Milhaud's ballet *The Creation of the World* there is a moment of tense feeling when the instruments of percussion, the big drum, the rattles, and the tomtom, are beaten in a sudden burst of frenzy, evoking by way of contrast the silent gloom of the tropical forest, where sound spreads its hypnotic exaltation with nothing to check it. Modern geometry has invented lines whose prolonged movements cover a surface. Similarly, this air squeezed through the narrow tube, like a spiral of red-hot wire, fills the room with its dense and glowing vibrations, amid which we cease to hear and almost to see one another. Our liberated spirits expand with joy, and when there is a brief lull, somebody proposes to send for singing-girls. All that is needful is to telephone to a neighbouring establishment.

We have come to the dessert, and so have our neighbours, for the hautboy is hushed and now throws off as it were only disjointed rings of sound, when they make their entry, bare-headed, with short hair cut in a very straight fringe on the brow, and a fixed smile on their lips, like our opera-dancers when they make their bow to the public, but they examine



## At a Restaurant

us furtively with timorous, inquisitive glances. Their sheath-like silk robes closely follow the lines of their delicate figures: China dislikes too fully developed curves, which their watchful coquetry succeeds in anticipating before it is too late. These are the flower-like public women of China, not prostitutes in the brutal European sense of the word. They are musical, often educated, and always amiable, and shed their graces upon parties at the price fixed by the house where they gain their livelihood. But no further progress towards acquaintance can be made without their consent. To obtain this, it is requisite to pay them attentions and become friends.

My neighbour has delicate features and rather sad eyes. She speaks the language of Peking, which is that of polite society in China. She is fond of reading. An inkstand and brushes are brought, and, apologizing for my clumsiness, I turn a classic compliment on her glance, comparing it to a dancing wave. The paper is passed from hand to hand, amid a flattering murmur. She observes me closely and asks where I am going and where I have come from, she approaches, grows less shy, and touches my wrist with her finger almost imperceptibly as though to see of what substance this being of another species is made. "It is an old skin, *lao p'i*," I say. She protests gracefully, and repeats my remark to her companions, who are less polite and only laugh.

When we take our leave, one of the Chinese guests who was sitting on the other side of her tells me that she is married to a student who has deserted her, and has two children dependent upon her, in order to support whom she has entered the house of the singing-girls.

## A Concert

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### A CONCERT

The orchestra is drawn up in a row under the veranda to which the flight of steps ascends, the audience are standing or sitting down below at the edge of the lawn. The *Ta t'ung*, or "Grand Equality" society of ancient music, is giving us a concert. The conductor is at the side, in front of a battery of gongs hanging in a rectangle, marking the beats of the measure with the flat pieces of wood in his hands. Leaning forward as he follows the music closely, he shows us his finely-cut face in profile, shadowed by a grey moustache. Now and then, at the end of a repeat, he advances and for a moment takes the place generally occupied by the conductor in Europe, giving a light, warning tap with his wooden clappers, from which the sound seems to fall in drops, while the orchestra pauses to listen to its last ripples before starting again.

It is an orchestra of flutes and guitars, the tinkle of the latter casting, as it were, a varied play of light over the smooth melody without any light or shade, with no bass to support it and no impetus to carry it along, but with its melodic line for ever rising and falling, following the fluctuations of the artist's thought with the docility of a painter's brush. The tone, which is perfectly true, is fuller than that of our flutes, being reinforced by the vibration of membranes made of bamboo-pith, and further strengthened by the pan-pipes, the tubes of which are furnished with a vibrating reed, producing a luminous blend of purity, strength, and softness.

## A Concert

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"China the Great"—"Impression of Shanghai"—"The mountain and the river"—"Variations on the signs of the heavens and earth"—"Meeting of the wind and the cloud"—such are a few titles of these melodies.

But a hum of talk is going on round me. I walk up the steps, where I am immediately offered a chair, to listen to the guitar solo which represents the battles of Han Hsin, that redoubtable war-lord who espoused the cause of him who was to found the Han dynasty, in days as troublous as our own, and only separated from them by twenty-two centuries of history.

It was about that time, apparently, that the guitar known as the *p'i-p'a* was imported into China from central Asia. Since then it has become quite at home and has developed a finished technique and a rich repertory. These muttering basses, these arpeggi like jets of sparks, these tremulous laments, these hollow galloping passages like a rush of reinforcements, this metallic clash as of arms, these strongly accentuated melodies, these passages advancing in strongly marked rhythm, these defiant returns, these headlong flights and grave prayers of thanksgiving all go to make up a descriptive symphony, like the "battle-pieces" composed by European musicians in the sixteenth century, but these are performed as solos on this instrument, which rivals the Spanish guitar in its velocity, precision, sonority, and variety of tone, from the quivering impact on the strings, sonorous as a gong, to the murmuring tissue of sound which seems to gleam and then die upon the air. But the tone is harder, less sustained, and more virile. The Chinese guitar is not meant for serenades.

As a choice and special treat and a signal favour, I am to hear the lute known as the *ch'in*, the most noble of Chinese instruments, the construction of which is attributed to the

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sage emperors of legendary antiquity, while its traditions, honoured down to the present day, have been enriched from age to age by the contributions of poets, painters, and philosophers. There is an anecdote, going back to as early as the third century before the Christian era, in which one of two friends played the lute while the other listened with such a fine ear and such discriminating taste that on hearing the opening notes without any explanation, he would exclaim, interpreting the symbolic melody: "How calm the river is!" or "How lofty is the mountain!" When he died the musician, having now none who could listen to him aright, broke his lute, and their memory, enshrined in the language, has survived in the metaphor: "to recognize its note," applied to friendship.

This is indeed *par excellence*, and in the truest sense of the word, essentially an instrument for chamber music. Its effects being all a matter of fine shades, it calls for intimacy. Leaving the other guests to gather round the collation served on the lawn, we enter the building, and I immediately recognize the long case of black wood, laid on a table like an offering on an altar, with a line of white dots to indicate each of the seven strings on its rounded upper side, vaulted like the firmament. The artist has seated himself, and with his hand on the set of tuning-pegs under the other side, as flat as the ground, is ascertaining whether it is in perfect tune. He closely scrutinizes the instrument and its stand, on which not a single grain of dust can be allowed to lie. He also looks carefully to see whether it is perfectly level. At his bidding a pupil inserts or withdraws the wedges of paper under the feet of the stand.

All is in order, and the musician is raising his curved forefinger in readiness for the attack, when a hideous din rends

## A Concert

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the air. A loud-speaker has just been turned on in the neighbourhood and hurls in through the open window the bray of trombones and the whine of saxophones picked up on some wave from America. All the windows have to be closed as quickly as possible, at the risk of stifling us on this blazing afternoon. Yet we do not stifle. Heat has lost all power over our bodies, which have become like dead logs, or our hearts like cold ashes, indifferent to all save this subtle melody.

The right hand plucks, strikes, or damps one or the other of the strings with varying intonations, and sometimes both of them together, when the limpid stream of the melody spreads out as into a pool and forms a chord. The left hand finds the exact position of the note on the string, but then, sliding ever so slightly to and fro on the same spot while the string is still vibrating, caresses it gently till it laughs or laments. It is not enough to strain one's ears, for at a short distance away the friction of the finger drowns the sound, which seems, as it were, to evaporate. It is through the spirit that this barely audible murmur between note and note has to be apprehended, like a melody grafted upon a melody, a variation stealing in like a phantom voice.

The Greeks had their quarter-tones and thirds of tones, the Gregorian chant has several neumes in which a *portamento* is indicated, clavecin music has its ornaments, and our stringed instruments their *vibrato*—all devices for moderating the rigidity of arithmetical laws and allowing some scope to the accents of nature. But the Chinese lute allows a perfectly free field, on quite a different plane, to this unwritten music, which, like the unwritten doctrine of the philosophers, approximates to a truth which is ineffable.

"Song of a fisherman at twilight after drinking." But he is no drunkard; he does not stagger in his gait. Roused by a light

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and subtle wine, he is inspired with this lively, rhythmical refrain, vibrating on the deeper strings, which finds an echo in the quiver of the breeze as it rises and falls in gusts, and the glimmer of water, slowly veiled and damped by a mist. Next, in a slower and more contemplative vein, comes a meditation on "An endless prospect of Autumn," in which one idea calls to another and grows out of it, soaring up into the calm air, where the ear follows them as they expand and then dissolve like puffs of melody rising one after the other—a music which seems to breathe. How Debussy would have loved it!

I can find only one thing to say: "It is marvellous." The artist inclines his head, but with a vigorous shake of denial. On the following day he sends me his *History of Chinese Music*, a precious collection of documents, with a commentary inspired by his unerring taste. It is he, too, who formed and trained this orchestra. I am in absolute agreement with Mr. Chêng Chin-wên and his group in their defence of such a noble tradition, and for this reason, on visiting the Conservatorium two days later, I express a wish to hear the concerto on the "Battles of Han Hsin" again, executed by that brilliant artist Mr. Shu-ying, professor of the Chinese guitar in that establishment. I fear this surprises and perhaps even annoys the Russian refugees who teach singing, piano, and violin there. Not that I consider a union between the music of China and Europe impossible. There is nothing to prevent it, for the scales are constructed upon exactly the same notes; but though the material is the same, the form is different. Yet points of contact do exist. To discover them, it would be necessary to know the history of music, not only in Germany, but in Europe, from the Middle Ages down to the present day.



*A BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE*

The express train from Shanghai to Hangchow is comfortable and covers the distance in five hours. My companion is Mr. Chu Min-i, a member of the central supervisory committee of the Government; he has put on his badge of office, and the detachments of soldiers on the platform at the stations click their heels and salute him with a hoarse shout. I knew him in Paris more than twenty years ago, while the Manchu Empire was still in existence. Possessing rare vigour and unerring skill, he excels in everything. I have tasted food of his cooking, admired his skill in tossing the Chinese shuttlecock, which is done with the foot, tried kites of his making, and joined in his gymnastic lessons. In the intervals he has studied medicine, taking his doctor's degree, acted as director of the Franco-Chinese school at Lyons, and been on various missions to Europe. Of sterling goodness and a self-abnegation that will stand any test, he is the practical man of the party. Everything he does will be well done.

The rice-fields are separated by mulberry plantations. There are round huts to shelter the buffaloes from the sun as they draw water for purposes of irrigation. Sails swell on a level with the ground and glide along on an unseen river. The names of the stations appear on the signboards not only in Chinese characters, but also in alphabetical ones, of which official trial is being made, and which I have not met with elsewhere. The meal served on the table in our compartment is in the

## *A Buddhist Pilgrimage*

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American style: there is fish grilled like a cutlet in egg and breadcrumb, and, as a dessert, a blancmange made with condensed milk, but the potatoes are crisp and the tea fragrant.

When we arrive at two o'clock a motor-car is waiting for us, for we shall have to start again at six. A crowd alights with us from the train, consisting of families bound on visits or excursions. I follow it absent-mindedly, having lost sight of my guide, but I feel no anxiety, for I am sure of finding him again at the principal entrance, so familiar is this provincial station with the official standing at the gate in the barrier, and the patient people laden with bundles and children, who press upon me without jostling me.

The car glides at a good pace along an excellent road, like all those in this region, which the civil war has spared, passing between hotels for summer visitors and the promenade with seats under the trees which runs along the river-bank. But before us rises the mountain, the water stretches away as far as the eye can see, and the landscape begins to assume an air of majesty.

Half-way up the hill, a tower rises above the trees. It is reached by a stone-paved road inclined like a staircase. It has thirteen storeys, marked by the roofs with which it is girt, curving first downwards and then upwards again, as though repelled by the earth. The staircases follow the inside of the octagonal walls, with their obtuse angles, in a greyish gloom. We have only to mount to the first storey before, leaning our elbows upon the stone balustrade, we look down through a clump of bamboos with their delicate foliage, massed in a ravine, to see, between two age-old arbor-vitæ trees, whose trunks and branches look as if they had been traced in well-articulated strokes by a Chinese brush, the gleaming river, on which junks glide along with their slatted sails. After so many

A Buddhist Pilgrimage

centuries of mutual harmony unmarred by disturbances, divorce, or recriminations, art and nature have come to be like a married couple of which it is impossible to say that one obeys the other, for the same idea occurs at the same moment to both their minds.

For the second time we alight from the car and enter a shady path, on which numbers of people are strolling up and down the shores of a murmuring river. It is a charming and venerable valley, closed by a rocky cliff which is hollowed out into caves. Above each of these the stone has been undercut, leaving an image of the Buddha and his disciples in relief. Along the roadside, almost touching one another, and heralding our approach to the chapels and convents farther on, are shops selling fruit, confectionery, sacred pictures, rosaries, bundles of chopsticks made of a local wood famous for this purpose, and an accessory of worship like a hollow wooden pomegranate resembling at a distance a cup and ball, with a club-shaped handle attached to a string. The children use it as a toy and can be heard tapping on all sides as hard as they can go.

This is a centre for pilgrimages and excursions. The crowd is in no hurry to reach the sanctuaries; each of them is carrying his jar of coolness under the shade of the trees, walking with short, even steps, so as not to spill it. Yet even that old lady, walking still more slowly and requiring a stick, will reach her goal in the end and present an offering in the hope of curing her rheumatism. By the end of the day that young couple strolling along in silence will have prostrated themselves before the statue of Kwan-yin, the mother of compassion, who holds a child in her arms, and may grant them one.

The colossal statues of painted wood, with their eternal smile and eyes gazing into infinity, tower upwards in the

A Buddhist Pilgrimage

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centre of the chapel, the place of honour, where the roof rises to form a canopy. In the corner, to the left of the entrance, are the seats where the bonzes are coming to take their places, in their sombre robes with a scarf over the shoulders. It is time for vespers. Two by two, seated side by side, they look over the book lying on the table, like musicians sharing the same desk in our orchestras, one turning the page while the other continues from memory. The melody, rising in a gentle curve expressive of prayer, resembles our Gregorian chant, but tends towards the full resonance of the deeper voices which remain on the same note, while its measure is regulated by the beat given out at regular intervals by the monk who acts as leader of the music, and taps on a hollow wooden nodule. I approach them noiselessly, as I should a busy swarm of bees unconscious of my presence, and listen. Mr. Chu summons me, for he knows what a program we have to carry out in a day. I pretend not to hear, but he touches me on the shoulder and we have to go.

Round the rectangular pool beneath the sheltering roof nearly all the tables are taken, but nobody says a word, emulating the silence of these fishes in the water from the Jade Spring, which deserves its name for its transparent smoothness, without a gleam of light, in which a trace of green quivers in a slight eddy. Red, black, and some of them white and hoary like old men, they lie so still that they look as if they had been laid on the bottom of the pool, and the largest of them are at least a yard long. We drink weak tea to quench our thirst, but if people buy these flat griddle-cakes like leathery pancakes, it is only to throw the fish scraps of them, which float like dead leaves while the monsters slowly begin to move. There are elderly men present, who, if they were to speak, seem fit to exchange such remarks as those one reads

## *A Buddhist Pilgrimage*

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in the famous work of an ancient philosopher: "The fish—how happy they are!" "How do you know they are happy?" "And you, how do you know that I do not know they are happy?"

But no doubt the young man leaning his back negligently against the rustic balustrade thinks other thoughts. From his European costume and air of assurance, one guesses him to be a student. The young girl who has remained decorously seated at table is a fellow-student, with her short hair and tight skirt, but her finger-nails are polished and her face well kept, as is right for a girl of good family. Without turning her head, she furtively steals a glance at him beneath her eyelashes, and he takes possession of her with a conquering look. To show his wealth and strength, he is lavishing his small cash, throwing cake after cake as far as he can into the water, where he ends by creating quite a stir.

We next follow a path lost in leafage, like those in the forest at my home in Franche-Comté, whose oaks and alders I recognize here, besides its clematis, angelica, briars, and ferns, and those tall grasses with a black tuft, whose stems come out of the sheath and remain in one's hand as one walks along. A brook prattles as the whim takes it to cross to the other side under a bridge of boughs. We mount up towards the spring. Once upon a time a tiger tore the rock open with a blow from its claws and the water gushed forth in answer to the prayer of a holy man who wished to retire to these solitudes. The green shades become tinged with white: it is the walls of the monastery, which, like the spring, bears the name of the "Tiger's Footprint" in memory of this miracle. A pleasant-mannered monk advances to meet us on the staircase leading up to the chapel, which forms a belvedere whose façade is nothing but a colonnade. Tables are set out before

A Buddhist Pilgrimage

the statue darkened by age and the pious banners hanging from the beams. The tea is fragrant. It comes from the parts producing the most famous varieties in China. One's eyes rest upon tree-tops stretching away to the horizon. The monk inquires my name and nationality and the purpose of my journey. We exchange visiting-cards. The monastic title on his corresponds to that of the father who has charge of the guests in a European monastery. As in Europe, too, he knows how to set them at their ease without losing his dignity, and his face wears the same air of charitable kindliness and gentle serenity. I ask permission to take his photograph. He watches me prepare my camera without asking any questions, taking a polite interest, like a man detached from the things of this world, who can give none but absent-minded attention to anything not concerned with the future life, or, more properly, the future lives, for one existence does not suffice for him to earn eternal salvation.

Buddhism was preached in India in the sixth century before the Christian era with the object of breaking the privileged position of the religion of the Brahmins, which was reserved for a caste, as that of the Jews was for a nation, and throwing it open to all. The virtue to which it assigns the highest place is compassion. Ousted from its land of origin, it spread far and wide outside it. In many of its sects the ceremonies of worship have some resemblance to those of the Catholic Church. The rationalist criticism of the nineteenth century seized upon these analogies for the purpose of discrediting Christianity. But on the contrary they are proofs which it may advance on its own behalf, like those which it finds in certain aspects of pagan philosophy in Europe. It is no explanation to appeal to chance and accident. How can we fail to recognize

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in these remote manifestations the attraction of the unknown Truth?

According to the accepted tradition of that church, Buddhism was introduced into China in the year 64 of the Christian era, through a prophetic vision. The Emperor saw in a dream a golden statue, which he described as soon as he woke. A little while later it was brought to him: it was the image of Buddha. Similarly, ten centuries before, another emperor had met a man in a dream and caused a search to be made for him everywhere, finding him at last employed on some embankment works. He was one of the wisest ministers whose memory history records.

The new religion made rapid progress, for it found the soil already prepared for it by the speculations of Taoism. Lao Tzu, whose book is the earliest of the Taoist writings, is supposed to have been born before Confucius, though, if his disciples are to be believed, he was able to have a conversation with the latter in which Confucius had the worst of the argument. The word from which Taoism takes its name means the Way, which regulates the march of events and guides the progress of the universe. But we are warned that this term is used as an arbitrary sign to express a principle that baffles definition, and hence nomenclature. "The Way of which a way can be made is not eternal life. The Name which can be used as a name is not the eternal Name." Such are the opening words of the treatise, or, rather, philosophical poem, attributed to Lao Tzu under the title of *Tao Te Ching*, or "The Sacred Book of the Way and of Virtue." The Way is neither existence nor nothingness, but includes both of these particular terms.

Extinction, or *nirvana*, which Buddhism has borrowed from

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Brahminism, is a frankly negative conception. But the virtue required for contemplating the Way and achieving union with it proceeds in much the same fashion, by a gradual annihilation of feeling, will, and thought. Buddhism adds an appeal to pity which is unknown to Taoism, and an original theory of its own to the effect that the soul ascends or descends with each new life, according as it is weighed down by its errors or lightened by its merits. But it still passes through an intermediate hell in order to become purified before it assumes a body; this is the mixed system adopted also by Virgil in the *Æneid*. The China of antiquity, like Greece in the period of the *Odyssey*, believed only in a period spent beneath the earth, where the dead found an attenuated semblance of life. Taoism has subsequently borrowed from Buddhism the prisons, judgment seats, and tortures of hell, giving it in exchange clearer ideas and a less prolix style.

"The Buddha was born in a barbarous land and did not understand our language, neither were his clothes fashioned like ours. His lips did not utter the words handed down to us by the emperors of old. His body did not conform to the bearing handed down to us by the emperors of old. He knew no justice between prince and subject, nor affection between father and son.

"Were he to come today in person and arrive here bringing news from his land, were he to ask to be received at the palace, Your Majesty would deign to consent, but would see him only once, at a public audience, with the courtesies due to an ordinary visitor; he would present him with only one complete suit of clothing and would then take care to have him conducted back to the frontier, without permitting him to trouble the minds of the multitude."

It was in such elaborate periods as these that a high official

## *A Buddhist Pilgrimage*

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in the ninth century of the Christian era, who was a master of classic prose, protested against a decision of the Emperor's to the effect that one of the Buddha's bones was to be brought in great pomp and deposited in a pavilion of the Imperial palace, transformed into a chapel.

"What is more," he proceeded, "now that he is long dead, how is it possible by a public decision to bring this dry bone, round which ill-omened miasmas still cling, into the Forbidden City? Confucius has said: 'Venerate demons and spirits, but only from afar.' In days of old, when the nobles came and laid their grievances before the king, the Imperial order first summoned witches and exorcists, with their brooms of peach-twigs, to expel the evil influence; not till then were the visitors admitted. Nowadays this decomposed relic is received for no reason, and people go in person to gaze upon it, with no witches or exorcists to precede them and no brooms of peach-twigs to accomplish the due rites; yet is there not one official to say that this is wrong, or one court dignitary to point out the danger? This is what fills me with shame. I demand that this bone should be handed over to the officer on duty so that he may destroy it by fire and by water, in order to extirpate the root of evil for ever, to bring doubt to a dead stop in the whole world, and remove confusion from future generations; such a deed all men would recognize as due to an incomparable wisdom. What a success! What a wonder! If the Buddha possesses a spiritual power that renders him capable of doing harm, it is only meet that any evil effects should fall on me alone. Heaven is my witness that I shall not complain. Powerless to bear worthy testimony to the zeal of my extreme gratitude, I respectfully present this memorial in the hope that it may obtain a hearing."

And misfortune did, indeed, arrive. Unmoved alike by the

A Buddhist Pilgrimage

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harmony of this eloquence and the force of these reflections, the Emperor rid himself of his counsellor by sending him far from the court, in the direction of Canton, as inspector of a savage region. He was a pious Emperor. But after him Buddhism was never again to recover such a privileged position. The exile might well have rejoiced in his tomb. He had only to die to gain a hearing. Returning to the positive maxims of Confucius, since that time the Government of China has hardly ever abandoned its attitude of neutrality towards foreign religions except when it has been anti-clerical in character. It even expelled the Buddhist congregations and confiscated their property, though they were soon reconstituted. Though the first Emperor of the Ming dynasty had spent some years in one of these monasteries in his youth, these emperors issued an ordinance against them, which is still in force, forbidding any monk to have more than one catechumen. The result, as was hoped, was to empty the monasteries, for owing to lack of time, zeal, or learning, a number of monks died without a spiritual heir. Yet the cloisters are not deserted. Buddhism is also in agreement with Taoism in permitting congregations of women, though in separate buildings. The morals of these nuns lend themselves to jests familiar in France since the Middle Ages; but it is not for a Frenchman to take them too seriously.

Nowadays Buddhism is the national religion of the Tibetans and Mongols, but under forms peculiar to these nations. The sects of Japan are derived from Chinese Buddhism. They are numerous and active, and their priests appear at the altar at official ceremonies. In China Buddhism is professed more sporadically and is not exclusive in character. "*Pu t'ung chiao, t'ung li*" is an axiom which was already the despair of Father Huc during the last century on his return from Tibet through



## *From Shanghai to Nankin*

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minds. I had the honour of seeing one of its highest dignitaries in Paris, who bore a title equivalent to that of His Eminence in our language, and has adopted as his tutelary principle the Supreme Void, a sacred entity of Buddhism, as it is of Taoism. His desire was to found a monastery in Europe and he was looking for a site. One need not be a Buddhist to point to this reawakening of religious feeling in China as an auspicious symptom.



FROM SHANGHAI TO NANKIN

It is a pleasure to find my bed made up at midnight in my sleeping-car and a pair of straw slippers in readiness. We spent the evening at the theatre, after such a full day that I was only able to take a passing glance at the University of the Dawn, with its tall buildings and wide bays under its straight roofs, and the college of Hsü chia hui, or, as it is called here, Zi-ka-wei, outside the city, at the end of the avenue leading up to it. This college, too, was founded by the Society of Jesus, and is further celebrated for its meteorological observation post, the director of which till recently was the late Father Froc, the learned scholar who could foretell the dread typhoons. But I know the value of the education given in these establishments even better than I could have discovered it from a hasty visit, for several of my Chinese friends completed their studies there and are not only acquainted with the subtleties of our language, but also have a taste for literature, which is none too common nowadays among the young people attending

A Buddhist Pilgrimage

China: "Religions differ, not reason." The result of this is an indulgence towards oneself which surprises our less peaceable minds. One of the curiosities of Shanghai is a Buddhist restaurant where recipes from the monasteries are said to be used. To judge by the luncheon which was served us there, they are remarkable, and it was almost a miracle, not of faith but of cooking, to produce the illusion of pork, fish, and duck in such a fashion out of beans, peeled walnuts, and preparations of flour. I really do not know whether the monks are in the habit of enjoying such succulent fare in their refectories, but there is nothing to prevent it, for the vegetarian regimen to which they are subject has as its sole purpose to exempt them from the guilt of murdering an animal, and not to combat gluttony.

The walls of the dining-hall were covered with religious pictures and scrolls upon which could be read maxims in verse, such as the following: "To drive away pain, it is necessary to 'destroy the ego.'" In the intervals between the courses—for the meal was served slowly enough to encourage meditation—we would go and learn a lesson in wisdom from the walls, just as one admires pictures. Pilgrims like myself to the monastery of the Tiger's Footprint do not forget to carry away a supply of these with them, together with their vows and prayers; as they plunge into the coolness of the path, they recall them one by one, and by the time they reach the path to the sanctuary, all have found a lodgment in their hearts.

For some years past, however, the Buddhist sect in China has been making efforts to obtain more than these superficial externals and casual honours. Proud of its glorious past and stimulated by the example of the Catholic Church and its recent successes, it has found a few studious scholars to collect its scattered doctrines again and impress them upon men's

From Shanghai to Nankin

educational establishments. They all pay a tribute to the generosity of their masters, who give their learning freely to all who ask, without insisting upon any previous profession of faith. And the Government of Nankin, which shares their gratitude, has recently granted the University of the Dawn official status.

The Society remains true to its allotted mission of forming a picked body, combining learning with piety. Here the order of these terms is inverted. They start with learning, and piety may follow, fostered by the feeling, which is very strong in the Chinese, of gratitude towards their instructors. "My father was uneasy," one of these young men confided to me; "he had been told that I had been converted to Catholicism." If I were in this pagan father's place, my mind would not be easy. That which has not happened today will happen tomorrow, and his unbaptized son is already more of a Christian than he thinks.

Some impressions of Shanghai: In the French concession a cream-coloured building resembling the casino at Monte Carlo, only twice the size; a terrace covered with tables, a hall for entertainments, a ballroom, and a swimming-pool. Tiers of seats looking down upon a race-track, where some spiritless greyhounds are racing, indifferent to the odds which are being posted up or the hum of those standing down below on the gravel betting. Russian shops selling portraits of the Tsar and boxes of preserves which certainly do not date from the old régime, but have passed through a whole succession of hands. Other signs in Russian advertise music-lessons and dancing-classes. A French bank, which refuses my pounds sterling because it has not yet heard the official exchange. A Chinese bank, which changes them for me, after a rapid calculation on the abacus, at a rate for which I could hardly have hoped.

From Shanghai to Nankin

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A Chinese university, with its lecture-rooms and laboratories opening on to lawns; masons at work adding another wing; inscriptions on every door saying: "Down with Japanese Imperialism!" But the patriotic students have not scrawled them up on the plaster in black as ours would have done; these are paper placards, very neatly posted up. A great general store with shop-windows coming down to the level of the pavement, for the heavy stone building is gradually settling down into the river mud. The architecture of a country depends upon its soil and climate. Skyscrapers were devised for New York and its rocky island. Whether it be a cottage, a small dwelling-house, a residential building, a palace, or a temple, a Chinese building has no walls, but partitions of earth, brick, woodwork, or stone, between posts, piles, or pillars solidly sunk in the arable soil, in which they are planted like trees.

I open the door to get a little air: there is a clear grey light in the corridor. Time to get up, for we arrive at seven o'clock. The train slows down. The rails are under water. I have often seen this in France, on the line passing close by my own village. And here is a levee of beaten earth, just like the one protecting our own plains, an artificial hill the top of which is no wider than a path; the sides descend at the same angle, calculated so as to give it a solid base, and have a similar coat of turf, which the water cannot wash away. But here the path rising above the water bristles with straw shelters. From three branches, forming a tripod, a pot hangs over a scanty fire of green wood. The husband is feeding the fire, the woman throws a handful of rice into the pot, the children laugh at the passing train. They are refugees, who can possibly see the trees in their courtyard from here, like a bush floating on the lake which stretches away as far as the eye can see, or a bundle

## From Shanghai to Nankin

of straw torn from their thatched roof.

The Yangtze, which comes down from Tibet and crosses the Chinese plain, is a giant which could swallow up the Garonne, the Rhone, and their tributaries at a single gulp. When it overflows, it floods whole provinces. Its brother the Hwang-ho, which lies farther north, is equally redoubtable. But when tamed, these monsters become the benefactors of the land, watering the fields and bearing goods and travellers to a distance. China is like a vast Egypt with two Niles, not to speak of a few supplementary rivers which in Europe would be of the first importance. Another difficulty is that the Nile flows almost in a straight line, whereas the watercourses of China waver, wind in and out, and even change their beds in this friable soil known to geology as loess, and assumed to be an alluvial deposit from the air, an impalpable dust borne on the wind from the desert and slowly settling on the ground like a fine down. Thus in 1864 the Hwang-ho suddenly moved the position of its estuary over sixty miles northwards, causing a disaster to which that of the Yangtze at the present day comes very near, if it does not outdo it. The victims may be reckoned by hundreds of thousands, possibly even by millions.

The *Shu Ching*, the book of sacred writings, reports in one of its chapters the works carried out by one emperor of ancient China, who spent several years travelling through his territories without pausing for a single day, in order to provide for the draining of the waters after a great inundation resembling our Flood. It is true that the authenticity of this document is not above doubt, for it goes back to a period prior to the Burning of the Books ordered by an energetic Emperor in the year 216 before the Christian era, with the object of depriving the conservative party of their support. Subsequently discovered or restored, it bears witness to a tradition which has

## *From Shanghai to Nankin*

never since been broken. The annals of all the successive dynasties of China give circumstantial information about the upkeep and construction of canals and dikes. If an emperor is worthy of the mission entrusted to him by Heaven, he excels in the arts of the hydraulic engineer; for instance, the one who first succeeded in calming the waters. If the land is ravaged by a flood, it is the emperor who is at fault. He has to make a public apology or abdicate. Nor have the people forborne to use the same argument against the Republic. The dikes of the Yangtze burst this year. Hence the Government is responsible for the catastrophe. It is its function to keep them in good order. Why did it not do so? Where has the money gone? To meet the requirements of some civil war, or into some private treasury? Such are the murmurs heard in China. I can understand this indignation. I am ready to share it, only stipulating that it be allowed free course in other countries too; in mine, for example, where a breach of two or three hundred yards appeared in the dike near my village towards the end of the last century. The question of repairing it came up at once. There were quarrels, intrigues, and bargaining, and work began last year. During these thirty years the water spread farther and farther, covering the most fertile land with its pebbles and ultimately necessitating the evacuation of a hamlet. In proportion to the size of the territory involved, the damage done is equally serious and the scandal the same.



## NANKIN, THE POLITICAL CAPITAL

The Chinese name Nankin means the Capital of the South, and was chosen by the first Emperor of the Ming dynasty, who established himself there in 1368. The Mongols whom he had recently crushed reigned in Peking, the Capital of the North. The north is opposed to the south as the earth is to the sky. A dynasty which by its title, Ming, invoked the radiance of day had to be sacred to the heavens. Peking, being no longer the capital, took the more modest name of Pei-p'ing, "peace of the North," but became Peking again at the beginning of the next century, when the Empire had two capitals. The Manchus, who seized the Imperial throne in 1644, chose that of the north, as being nearer to their own country. The Republic, which succeeded them in 1911, was at first unwilling to leave Peking, partly to avoid expense and partly out of deference for foreign diplomatists. But since 1928 Nankin has again become the political capital of China, of which Peking, once more taking the name of Pei-p'ing, will be rather the intellectual capital, the city of monuments, museums, and universities.

Fallen from its former splendour, Nankin was ruined towards the middle of the last century by the insurrection which took as its motto *T'ai-p'ing*, or Supreme Peace. The leader of this party preached at once a return to national unity and a new religion, akin to Christianity. The first article in its

## *Nankin, the Political Capital*

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program brought almost all the Chinese into agreement; this was the expulsion of the foreign dynasty which had come from a barbarous land, which held them in suspicion, forbade them access to the higher grades in the army, imposed the pigtail upon them as a mark of servitude, and, if they were officials, forced them to leave their own province, so as to make them strangers in their own land as soon as possible. It only succeeded in this through ten years of war and pitiless repression. After its accession to power, rebellion seethed in the southern provinces, which, thanks to their remoteness and the spirited character of their people, had leanings towards independence. But such disturbances portended that the virtue of the dynasty was exhausted. It maintained itself only by violence. Its days were numbered.

Today the over-expanded city is shrinking like a dried nut within the shell of its ramparts. But new life is flowing in as avenues are being driven through it. The art of building on a rational plan, known nowadays as city-planning, can find scope in these abandoned quarters. Recognizing the importance of these projects, I tried before leaving to interest some French contractors in them, but they would have none of them. So I was not surprised to see that the excavating machines, the concrete pipes, and the steam-rollers came from the United States.

The Government offices will be grouped together, but separated by gardens. Their premises are being built in the Chinese style, which can now be adapted to the requirements of modern comfort. They are built of stone and rise to a height of three or four storeys, yet they have nothing heavy or stiff about them, thanks to the colonnades and peristyles which make them airy, the bays which give them light, and the roofs which turn up at the edge. The Ministry of Com-

Nankin, the Political Capital

communications is particularly pleasing to the eye, with its columns and its two roofs, one of which rises above it like a fur cap, while the other surrounds it like a girdle below the highest storey.

The internal equipment includes desks, filing-cabinets, and telephones, the apparatus of administration in all countries. The furniture is of black wood, square and with a sober elegance. There are spacious vestibules, inviting staircases, a reception-room, in which I am offered tea. Here are the beginnings of an organization. Imperial China had one of its own, but it is out of date. The transitory presidents and rough soldiers who succeeded it were surrounded by none but partisans or favourites with no well-defined functions, who might be replaced any day. The departments of the various ministers have now been carefully defined. As an eminent diplomatist said to me, one knows at which counter to apply.

Here is another scaffolding, under the postern gate, which is too narrow to admit automobiles, motor-buses, trucks, and market-gardeners' carts. An intelligent municipality is having it widened without interfering with the rampart above, which raises skywards its battlements taller than a man. It dates from the fourteenth century and resembles those of our towns at the same period, but with a sense of greater power and gravity. For sixteen centuries before that time China no longer had any royal residences, but only apanages for the princes of the reigning family. This crown of stone surrounding the city is neither feudal nor royal; it bears witness to the majesty of the Emperor, deputed by Heaven to govern the earth.



THE FAITHFUL SERVANT

The automobile stops in the hollow road which clings to the sloping side of the hill. The footman in his white livery descends from his seat beside the chauffeur and picks up a splinter of rock. "Look!" say the ladies, "the rock is purple." Henceforth I shall know that the "mountain of purple rock" deserves its name.

To the south-east of Nankin a luncheon was awaiting us in a cool villa. We need only return to the city in time for the evening. Turning to the left, we leave behind us the farms with their straw-stacks and cow-sheds built of planks, then mount upwards through plantations of walnut-trees, horn-beams, and ashes, under a sky in which float clouds whose shadows obscure the contour of the ground in large patches. But the sharp ridges on the horizon preserve their inviolable precision.

"It might be supposed to be a matter of indifference to good government that a capital should have fine promenades. This is a great mistake. If the air is heavy, thought becomes confused. If the view is blocked, the will meets with a check. A sage requires objects which rest his mind, prospects which give him light, if he is to feel tranquil, at peace, and always beyond the influence of what is merely necessary. It is then that reason makes its way, and action is achieved."

These maxims were framed in the eighth century of the Christian era, under the T'ang dynasty, which enjoyed the

The Faithful Servant

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most exquisite luxury and the sweetest reveries at the water-side or amid the mountain solitudes. They are still true. Do I not see before me, in the elegant motor, two ladies of the court? Dressed in short skirts of European cut for the drive, yet Chinese in the suppleness of their lines and their fine silk stuffs, their hats are coquettishly tilted a little on one side above their smooth hair—hats of fine, pliant straw like those worn by the shepherdesses of the Trianon, like whom, too, they have cheeks powdered with scarlet rouge like the bloom of a peach, and tiny cherry lips. Which is the woman and which the girl? Not that there is any resemblance between them. One of them is brilliant, the other pensive. But their glance, whether direct or sidelong beneath their crescent-like lids, is bathed in the same limpid clearness. One is slender as an adolescent, the other chubby like a child. Each has her own perfume, artfully concocted and soft and lingering as a muted chord.

There is no longer any emperor, yet these are princesses. Not princesses of the Manchu court, which for three centuries past had none but captives, but of the Chinese Republic, whose capital, as happens under national dynasties, is again becoming the meeting-place of high society. Neither the republics of Europe nor those of America have any princesses, and it is a serious deficiency. It is not enough for a government to be good. It ought also to be beautiful, for on this depends the prestige with which it cannot dispense if its authority is to be accepted. And if anybody objects on the score of the extra expense, it is easy to reply that it costs no more to build palaces and hold festivals than to fill the pockets of vulgarians who keep all the money to themselves. It is quite true that a young and beautiful woman is not always a good counsellor, but an old and ugly woman may be even more

## *The Faithful Servant*

fatal. The charming Chinese ladies who do the honours of their country today, making it still more amiable in my eyes, love it with all their hearts and serve it with all their wits, which are very keen. When they plead its cause, I must confess that their smile is an added argument. This is all to the advantage of the Chinese Republic and of those who listen to them.

The car stops again. To the right of the road beyond the ditch, one sees beneath a canopy of stone a stele standing upright with its vertical inscription, supported on the domed back of a giant tortoise. This is the entrance to a tomb, which opens upon the processional avenue, now shrunk to a path between bushes of alder and hawthorn; but the Guardians, in pairs, are at their post, their grey stone bodies pressing aside the branches at intervals. First come the rearing war-chargers, held by grooms rooted to the ground in an attitude of rigid respect. Next come the symbolic animals, the round-backed sheep and lions bristling with fury. The tomb is not far away, for these soldiers on guard, with their hands on their sabres and covered with scaly armour, allow us to pass on to the civil officials in their long robes, with chin resting on their staff of office. But where shall we find the dead man? Without a stone to cover him, without a monument, without so much as a mention of his name, he lies hidden beneath this modest mound, covered with a mantle of shrubs and wild flowers. Here there is a dip in the hill which allows us to see the city walls in the distance. The breeze, as it stirs the branches, breaks up the light and diffuses the perfumes ripened by the day's heat; piously and in silence we pluck the scabious, carnation, and clematis.

At that time, as often in the course of her history, China was in a state of upheaval. A century had sufficed for the

## *The Faithful Servant*

Mongol dynasty to exhaust its vital energy, and it was falling into decadence. The moment had arrived to eliminate these foreign masters. Hsü Ta, a robust, sturdy country lad, had followed one of the armed bands which were carrying on a guerrilla warfare against them all over the country. He distinguished himself by his courage and then passed on into another group of stronger and better-organized combatants, the leader of which, like himself country-bred, had been a novice in a Buddhist monastery. He won this leader's confidence. Placed at the head of a detachment, he displayed a talent which was equalled by his humanity. He treated his prisoners well and subjected his young soldiers to the most rigid discipline, forbidding them under pain of death to molest the civilian population. Hence they were welcomed everywhere. The whole country became their accomplice. A few years later his leader rose to the Imperial throne, while Hsü Ta, in command of a powerful army, pursued the routed Mongols as far as the frontier.

The Emperor never forgot the comrade of his days of misfortune. He made him his right-hand man and, in spite of his respectful remonstrances, treated him as an intimate friend, but he could never succeed in inducing him to accept any other reward. In order to present him with one of his own palaces, he one day devised the idea of inviting him to drain several goblets of a heady wine. Hsü Ta, who was unaccustomed to these excesses, succumbed to sleep. Advantage was taken of this to carry him to his new residence. He woke up in terror on a magnificent bed, but rolled off it, threw himself on the ground, and stammered out his excuses to the Emperor, who was standing there smiling. He had to remain in the palace, and a little while later, when he had grown accustomed to it, a triumphal arch was erected before the en-

## *The Faithful Servant*

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trance commemorating his signal services.

He died shortly afterwards at the age of fifty-one. The official history of the dynasty which started with this reign informs us that he was buried on the northern slope of Mount Chung, and the "Way of the Spirits" constructed by Imperial order. Chung is the geographical name, "the Mountain of Purple Gold" the popular name. The way is the one which we have been following between the effigies of the guardians who guide propitious influences towards the dead man.

The Emperor had made him King of Chung Shan, the mountain of Chung. This was only a title like those conferred by Napoleon upon his marshals in memory of victories. By reason of his exalted origin, he replaced his family name Hsü Ta by that of Hsü Chung-shan on his funeral stele.

"You know who came here twenty years ago?" Yes, I know. The event has already made history. Born on a farm too, but in 1866, and in the south of Canton, where the insurrection of "Supreme Peace" had barely been repressed and still left living memories behind it, he had devoted his life to the restoration of order, justice, and prosperity in China. The first condition for achieving this was the overthrow of another, already decadent foreign dynasty, that of the Manchus. In 1895, after the war with Japan, which had ended in disaster, he attempted a preliminary rising at Canton, which was discovered by the Imperial police. He succeeded in making his escape, but on October 11, 1896 he was arrested at the Chinese Legation in London and only set free on the urgent intervention of the English Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. Then for fifteen years he led a wandering life in Europe, America, and Japan—when his presence could be tolerated in the last-named country, for it was disquieting to

The Faithful Servant

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the neighbouring Government—with brief visits to China, where there was a price on his head. He also hid in the southern forests near the frontier of Tonkin, where he was well received by the French authorities. A dozen times he organized a revolt, and a dozen times it was put down. "It is not necessary to hope," said William the Silent, the hero of the Netherlands in their insurrection against Spain, "in order to venture on an undertaking, nor to succeed in order to persevere." In his autobiography the liberator of China has recourse to a maxim laid down in the *Book of the Scriptures*: "It is not difficult to know, but to act." But he adopted an inverted form of this maxim: "It is not difficult to act, but to know."

Events have proved him to be right. Turned inwards and, as it were, shrunk into himself, worn by study, and having acquired by meditation the habit of concentration, he wore his inflexible idea like an inner armour, able to withstand every blow of fate. A day came when the movement which he had fomented suddenly spread like a devouring fire. The rapidity of its victory was a surprise even to him. He happened to be in America at the time. A telegram forwarded from city to city reached him just in time for him to return to China, where he was hailed with acclamation. Unanimously chosen President of the infant Republic, he expressed his thanks for this honour, but thought it his duty to decline it, for it seemed to him that the former Minister of Imperial days, Yuan Shih-k'ai, who had obtained the abdication of the heir to the throne, was better equipped for dealing with the difficulties of the transition period, having friends in every party. It was now that he visited this tomb, following the Way of the Spirits. What did they murmur in his ear? No doubt the advice for which he was seeking, for on his return

## *The Faithful Servant*

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he adopted as his first name the title inscribed on the stele by the Emperor's will, thus intimating, in accordance with a very ancient custom in China, that he would henceforth shape his life according to that of the man who had been given it before him. His family name was Suen, his personal name Wen, and his parents had called him Yi-sien, which signifies the "Leisured Immortal" and is connected with Taoist beliefs. The personal name is placed after the family name. Suen Yi-sien is pronounced in the Cantonese dialect Sun Yat-sen, and this popular appellation is now famous throughout the whole world. But his works, which are the sacred books of regenerated China, and his portraits, which are venerated as public monuments, add to his ancestral name of Suen that of Chung-shan, which he himself chose and which bears witness to his spiritual descent.

We return to the car on the dusty road. A sound of hard, regular breathing is heard slowly approaching. It is a labourer who uses this device to enable him to keep step and stimulate his strength, for across his shoulder, hanging from either end of a bamboo resting upon it, like the two pans of a scale, he carries two piles of baskets, overflowing with fruit and vegetables. We laugh at this piece of good luck. The footman hails him. Wound up like a machine, the man cannot manage to stop till a little farther on, where he sets down his load on the grassy edge of the road and looks at us open-mouthed, as though awakening from a dream. Armfuls of green beans and sweet peppers are pulled out of the baskets. We build up a tower of small change on the ground. He counts it over in a low voice and declares that it is too much, so he adds some egg-plants. No discussion is possible. To him it is a matter of business and not of alms. He sits down, gets up again with his bamboo over his shoulder, turns his head a moment to

The Emperor and Empress

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thank us for having lightened his burden, and, resuming his breathless, plaintive cry, plunges back into the dust of the road and his waking sleep.

As for us, we carry off a whole kitchen garden in our automobile.



## *THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS*

Between two wooded hills rise the gloomy battlements under a cloudy sky. After reigning for thirty-one years the Emperor, visited in turn by death, had to leave the capital which he had fought to recover; but he did not go far. Paved with stone slabs, the Way of Spirits is the avenue up which the long funeral procession advanced. After the usual traditional animals, come, each in its due order, those of distant lands, whose tribute and homage they represent: two kneeling camels, two elephants with their splendid curved lines. The officers of the Emperor's military and civil establishments, gigantic and secular, gaze across at one another over our heads. A flat marble-paved space, surrounded by green trees, leads to the postern gate in a massive bastion. This is the entrance to a vaulted passage driven through the wall of masonry at a steep slope and coming out on the rough hillside where the sombre pines sigh. A sepulchre of proportions meet for his Imperial grandeur, yet where nature reasserts the rights which she refuses to share, exactly as she does with the least of his subjects. This is the last stage of his funeral progress, where, leaving behind him the solemn procession, alone henceforth in the

## *The Emperor and Empress*

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night of the coffin, the Son of Heaven comes to restore his mortal remains to the earth which nurtured him.

His refuge is inviolable. The eye alone can penetrate beyond its protecting fortress. But in the funerary chapel on its nearer side, on raising our heads—for the hall is lofty—we looked upon two pictures on either side of the far wall towards the hill.

The Emperor's face is extraordinary, yet striking in its truth, such is the vitality that emanates from it. The whole line of it is concave, from the point of the resolute chin to the eye-sockets forming an acute angle below the wrinkled forehead and projecting brows; and supporting this face, contracted with concentrated thought and wasted by the cares of authority, we divine beneath the ample, restless folds of the robe an emaciated body upheld by an unbending will. He is not alone. As in life, the Empress is present as his necessary companion, plump and placid, with her direct gaze and smooth brow.

He was born in a country village, as the fourth son of a very poor family. There came a year when the harvest was bad, and he saw his parents and brothers die of starvation. He was then seventeen. Had it not been for a charitable neighbour who made him a present of a piece of ground, he would have been unable to bury his dead. Alone in the world, he entered the Buddhist monastery of the August Awakening, but did not stay there long, if we are to believe the official history, whose testimony is sometimes rather open to suspicions of anti-clericalism.

All the Buddhist orders are mendicant orders. The young monk set out on his rounds begging for alms, but fell ill on the way. He was taken in and cared for by some worthy people in the neighbourhood and does not seem to have re-

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turned to the monastery till three years later. Scarcely had he returned when he left it again, but this time to fight against the Mongols. He had seen the world at too close quarters.

The leader of the little army in which he had taken service singled him out for notice and arranged a marriage for him with the daughter of another leader, whose virtues were doubtless known to him, for she made a model wife. Who would think, on seeing this portrait of her in her placid maturity, that she once followed him on all his campaigns, preparing his griddle-cakes and slices of meat, which, for lack of a fire, she cooked by the heat of her body in readiness to provide him with a supply when they met again at the halting-place in the evening? Many years later he recalled these memories in the Imperial palace. "Those," he said, "were finer feasts than the pea soup or wheaten paste grown on the soil of the regions most famous for it." For his Buddhist training had given him a preference for vegetable food.

She remained an excellent housekeeper, but, inspired by higher motives, she practised economy in order that she might be charitable. Her robes of natural-coloured silk, which could be worn a long time because they would wash, caused the public treasury no burdens on the score of frivolous extravagance. With what was left of the stuff she had robes made which she presented to the princesses, desiring in this way to show them how precious this material was. In the sewing-rooms attached to the palace she gave orders that all clippings of wool were to be collected and made into blankets for the poor and aged. With a confidence of which frequent examples may be found in China at all periods and in all classes, the Emperor readily sought her counsels. She was not afraid to intervene even when she saw him in a violent rage. She could not calm him immediately, but next day, having

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thought it over, he would grant a pardon.

He was hasty through excess of vigour, but had a most noble heart. In time of war he would spare the prisoners and send the captives home. When he was already master of the Empire, a Mongol prince was brought to him, the last scion of the family which had been expelled, whom he gave orders to liberate, in spite of the advice of his ministers. One day when the courtiers about him were proudly enumerating their captures, he said to one of them irritably: "The Mongols reigned for a century. My parents and yours owe them their subsistence. Why this vain talk? Change your tone, and quickly, too!" To him respect for human life was a principle of government, being an essential rule of Buddhist morality applied to politics. One of his proclamations, in the twentieth year of his reign—the year 1387 of the Christian era—opens with these words: "What is called piety towards Heaven does not consist only in homage and ceremonies. It must also be translated into reality. Heaven entrusts the prince with the mission of treating the people as his sons. To honour Heaven the prince ought first, then, to have pity upon the people. To have pity upon the people is truly to honour Heaven. In the same way the Government entrusts a man with some administrative function. If this man cannot make the people happy he is betraying the prince's will. There is no greater crime than an offence against the prince's majesty." Or again he says: "He who is prince among men takes Heaven as his father, the earth as his mother, and the people as his sons. That which pertains to every occupation must be carried out. If we call upon Heaven, it will not be to ask happiness for ourselves, and then we shall in truth be causing the universe to flourish." These ideas, these very expressions, have been handed down from the remotest antiquity in Chinese books

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of morality and history. But the tone is quite different, having a spontaneous persuasiveness in which the influence of a tenderer and more fervent religion lingers on.

The Empress preceded him to the grave by a few years. She was only fifty-one years old when she fell seriously ill and refused the aid of doctors, fearing lest, if they failed to cure her, they might be punished.

The official history which records these characteristic details cannot be accused of flattery. According to the invariable custom in China, it was drawn up on the basis of contemporary records under the next dynasty, which happened to be that of the Manchus.

In spite of the grooves with which the stone is scored, it is a little slippery as one descends the gloomy passage. "I am frightened," say the ladies, but they are only jesting, for they go on ahead of me, and I rejoin them at the edge of the marble space, where they are examining the foliage of the trees. They are arguing about what these are called, for they are lovers of nature. If one loves a thing, one desires to know it, and in order to know it, it is necessary to question the object itself and call it up before our mind. Nothing exists for us outside ourselves until it has been given a name. It is written in the Book of Genesis that God presented man with his creatures, that he might name them according to his will. Confucius made a collection of popular songs and recommended his disciples to read them, for, he said: "You will find in them the names of plants and animals in large numbers."

But suddenly one of the ladies breaks away and runs across the paved space to the other balustrade, from which one sees in the west a mass of trees and rocks boldly outlined against the disk of the setting sun. She points towards it with her slender arm and exclaims in a language steeped in memories,

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unwittingly discovering a title for some poem: "Oh! The sun is sinking to the west of the mountain!"



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One sunny morning I go to do homage at the tomb of Sun Yat-sen. There is no guard of honour here, no sacred animals, but a whole hill has been transformed into a monumental staircase, dazzling in its whiteness. "You are not afraid of getting tired?" ask my friends. And it is not a walk, indeed, but a climb. At the top is the chapel, with its shining glazed roof, sagging a little as it rests upon columns placed at intervals, a sacred belvedere, the refuge of air and light. What voice is it that one hears upon the mountains? Confucius told us long ago: it is the voice of humanity, growing stronger and stronger as the horizon widens out, revealing other climes, in which human thought still finds the same echo.

Such is the classic mountain. China knows the romantic mountain, too, with its precipices, gloom, and terrors. At an age when ordinary people are preparing to die, it is there that the Taoist sage, with his heart devoid of passion and his mind purified of all opinion, goes to seek a safe retreat for the long days that are left to him. And if he has become a "true man," in the end he will ascend into Heaven. For Taoism like every religion worthy of the name, aspires towards eternal salvation, but the elect are few and keep their secret.

Sun Yat-sen was a Confucianist; he devoted his life to humanity. When the Republic was set up in China after the

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abdication of the foreign dynasty, his reply to those of his partisans who believed the Revolution to be complete was: "It is hardly beginning." This was in 1912. After many unsuccessful attempts and costly failures, they had succeeded in ascending a few steps, as far as the first terrace: the country had been delivered. But he looked upwards at the ascent which continued as far as the summit, still lost among the clouds; and events allowed him no breathing-space.

Before advancing further, a hard struggle was necessary if they were not to start the climb all over again. A new system of government is threatened by competing interests which find a free field, and still more by the force of the past, which acts as a clog upon it. The French, after founding the Republic in 1792, saw it lead, three years later, to the Directory, and then to the Consulate and Empire, the fall of which in 1815 had as its consequence a return to the old régime, almost unmodified. It is hardly surprising that in its early years the Chinese Republic seemed at the mercy of a *coup d'état*.

From the first it was seen that the President, Yuan Shih-k'ai, could not be relied upon. He was ambitious, though his ambitions were no vulgar ones. Having grown old in the exercise of power, he was greedy for it, impelled by a natural instinct which habit had rendered more and more exacting, as happens with a vice. But he loved his country, and though bent upon becoming master of it, he flattered himself that he was better able to rule it well than anybody else. A man of the old régime, he remained attached to the form of government which alone had proved successful in China hitherto. Experience of affairs made him sceptical of ideas. He always accepted the verdict of force. So long as the reigning dynasty had seemed able to maintain itself, he had served it faithfully. In 1898 the Emperor, who was still a minor, desired, on the

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advice of one of his intimates, to emancipate himself and try the experiment of a liberal Empire. Informed of this project, Yuan Shih-k'ai did not hesitate to communicate it to the Empress Dowager, in order that she might keep the absolute power in her own vigorous grasp. But after her death and that of the Emperor, which followed a few days later in 1908, the throne descended to a child of four, and the regency to inexperienced princes.

Monarchy in China is based upon divine right, but from remotest antiquity this right has been revocable. The Son of Heaven is only a son by adoption. If he shows himself unworthy of the confidence reposed in him, Heaven repudiates him and annuls his investiture, *ko ming*. Insurrection then becomes a duty, and the party which takes the initiative in it calls itself "the party annulling the investiture," *ko ming tang*.

At the period in which history verges on legend, power was granted personally, and on his death or abdication the emperor chose his successor from among the men whose virtue he had learnt to appreciate, thereby interpreting the will of Heaven. But soon the Empire became hereditary, being granted to a family in which it was handed down from father to son, according to the right of primogeniture. Hence when the family abused its power it was from the family that it was withdrawn, Heaven having signified its disapprobation by public calamities and popular disorders.

The Manchu dynasty had incurred disapprobation. All the Chinese could rejoice when it was visited with judgment, for it was of foreign origin, and had treated China as a conquered country. On this point Yuan-Shih-k'ai was able to come to an agreement with Sun Yat-sen without difficulty. But his patriotism hoped no more than to replace it by a Chinese dynasty,

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as had happened to that of the Mongols in former days, and his ambition made him feel it his duty to become its founder and enjoy equal glory with the ancestor of the Mings.

Before the fall of the Empire, Sun Yat-sen had been the leader of the revolutionary party, *ko ming tang*. When this became a governing party, a slight change in the pronunciation of its name sufficed to turn it into the *Kuo min tang*, or National People's party. At the elections to the National Assembly, which met on April 8, 1913, it obtained a majority on the strength of a definitely republican program. Yuan Shih-k'ai's rejoinder to this was to dissolve the Assembly on November 8. It has been said that these elections, in which the suffrage was indirect, were only a sham, that none of the people knew what it was all about, that the delegates sold their votes to the highest bidder, and that the outcome of it all had been that the Chinese nation was represented by a disorderly collection of impostors and intriguers. I am not at all surprised. Is it not the usual custom before an election in the republican countries of Europe and America to estimate how much it will cost? Can it be seriously maintained that one elector out of a thousand, even in the most educated classes of society, has the knowledge requisite for discussing a political problem and estimating the merits of a candidate? At a public meeting does not the advantage always remain with the one who shouts most loudly, and in conferences behind closed doors does it not always fall to him who offers most? Sun Yat-sen, who had travelled, was not ignorant of these vices inherent in an appeal to the people. But parliamentary government was the form current in modern times. China had got to adopt it in order to place itself on the same level as other nations, after which it might work towards something higher. It was only a stage, but one through

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which China was bound to pass.

Having been turned out, his party became revolutionary again, and Sun Yat-sen once more went into exile. It was in Japan that he found at once a refuge and an observation post. He had the misfortune not to be followed there by his wife, whom he had chosen from a family in modest circumstances belonging to his own part of the country. She had already borne him a son, and courageously accepted the risks of the struggle against a régime which offered no hope of better things, but she could not understand this resumption of hostilities after the victory had been won, especially against one who had been an ally on the eve of it. In the China of those days marriage was merely a contract between two families, concluded or broken at will on the initiative of either party, without any necessity for intervention on the part of any civil or religious authority. Having repudiated his first wife, Sun Yat-sen married on October 25, 1915 the daughter of one of his most devoted partisans, Miss Sung Ch'in-lin, who had recently completed her studies in America. She brought him beauty, intelligence, and fortune, and he was able to enjoy peace and happiness at her side. But she shared his convictions and never ceased to encourage him in the hard struggles which he still had to face.

Europe was now at war. Germany thought it an adroit move to espouse the cause of Yuan Shih-k'ai. Preparations for proclaiming him Emperor were complete when he died suddenly on June 6, 1916. On September 10 of the following year Sun Yat-sen returned to Canton with the object of setting up an independent government there by the aid of his party, which once more proclaimed itself to be national and popular.

For at that time the provinces of the centre and north were

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rent by civil war between rival leaders, each of whom aspired towards carving out a domain for himself and extending it as far as possible. This was no new peril. During the prolonged disorders that followed the collapse of all its dynasties, China has more than once been dismembered, but afterwards, when Heaven has at last signified its will, the fragments have never failed to reunite again round the stable Government, and there has been no breach of continuity.

But this time the internal conflict was complicated by relations with foreign powers, which Chinese policy had not had to take into account before the nineteenth century. Its nearest neighbour, too, was the most redoubtable, owing to its rapacity. Japan had declared war upon Germany, and in the autumn of 1914 had had no difficulty in depriving it of its colony of Tsingtao, in the Chinese province of Shantung. Having seized this place, it meant to keep it, as it intimated to China in the spring of the following year, demanding her immediate acceptance and adding other clauses intended to secure the Japanese a privileged position throughout the whole territories of the Republic. These were the "twenty-one demands," the very name of which is a reminder of a deep humiliation. The moment was well chosen: the attention of the world at large was distracted by the European war, and China was plundered as though by highway robbers.

The successor of Yuan Shih-k'ai in Peking desired to retrieve the mistake which the latter had committed by his rapprochement with Germany, and ranged himself on the side of the Allies. But when he announced in the newspapers the approaching departure of Chinese troops to support them in Europe, Sun Yat-sen addressed an open letter to the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, protesting against this decision. He recalled how Japan, which had joined the Allies,

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had done China grave wrongs, and pointed out that, owing to the state of the Chinese soldiers' training, these reinforcements could be of no use on the European battle-fields, but would bring the military party in China a dangerous increase of prestige. With his eyes for ever fixed upon his country's future, he never deviated from the policy he had laid down.

As a matter of fact, the intervention of China reduced itself to the dispatch of some thousands of labourers, who did their duty conscientiously and bravely when they came near the front. Her reward for this was that the Convention of 1915 with Japan was inserted in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and it proved impossible to restore China her territory till afterwards. Sun Yat-sen's distrust had been justified. Subsequently Allied diplomacy never ceased to uphold the military Governments of the northern provinces against him. Germany was crushed and, for the time being, out of action; Japan was still threatening. Tsarist Russia had ordinarily had no relations with China beyond those between good neighbours, and the Soviet Government did its best to carry on the tradition. In January 1923 its ambassador, Joffe, had an interview at Shanghai with Sun Yat-sen, who had recently applied unsuccessfully to the United States, England, and Germany for the purpose of obtaining officers to train his troops. Russia sent him Borodin, who was at once appointed "high counsellor" to the Canton Government.

Civil war went on, however, dying down at one point only to flare up at another. Sun Yat-sen exhausted his last forces in it. The wandering, hunted period of his life, when a price had been placed upon his head, was certainly a less painful trial to him than this one, when he was obliged to take up arms against his own countrymen. It is true that he was simultaneously carrying on negotiations, even during the progress

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of battles, to the scandal of Europeans, who, once war is declared, like to go on "to the end"—that is, to the point of extermination, as recent events have proved. But just as there is a French saying that a bad settlement is better than a good lawsuit, so the Chinese have always preferred to the most brilliant of victories a compromise in which both sides made concessions. It was, however, impossible to effect a settlement, for there were too many parties concerned; there was always at least one that refused to bind itself, and another which professed that its interests had been injured and so violated its agreement. It was necessary to struggle against a changing web of intrigue, plots, and betrayals. Towards the end of 1924 Sun Yat-sen went to Peking to confer with two of the great northern leaders. There he fell ill and had to be taken to the Rockefeller Foundation's hospital. The doctor diagnosed cancer of the liver, of which he died on March 12, 1925, in his fifty-eighth year. Modern medicine with its microscopes and cultures of bacilli has as yet failed to discover the origin of cancer, possibly because it is looking for it in the wrong place. Anyone, without being a biologist, may have noticed that this disease often develops as the result of a great grief. If Sun Yat-sen died in agony, he died for his country.

Here a break occurs in the sequence of his actions upon earth. Only his ideas continue upon their upward way. It still has many stages to surmount. Yet on high, beneath the shade of its canopy, a rectangle of deeper shadow begins to be visible. It is the entrance to the sanctuary.

When I first saw him, passing through Paris while still an exile, his close-fitting frock-coat almost lent him the appearance of an Anglo-Saxon pastor. Having studied at the Protestant school in Honolulu, where one of his brothers had settled, and afterwards at the medical schools of Canton and

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Hong-kong, he had a degree in medicine and surgery and had become converted to the sect of the Wesleyans or Methodists. He was approaching Christianity even more closely than the "Supreme Peace" insurgents.

Yet he was no pastor, this slender figure standing waiting for me in his hotel bedroom, with his eyes fixed upon a goal invisible to my eyes, and speaking almost in an undertone, with a gentle smile in which the contemplative lines at the corners of his mouth never relaxed. A pace behind him, drawn up respectfully in a row, stood three or four young men, forming, as it were, his guard of honour. On the previous day he had sent me a multigraphed pamphlet, setting forth in full his plan for the future revolution, with its three phases of military occupation, political tutelage, and regular government, and now, assuming me to be familiar with it, he dealt with another question, that of relations with the foreign powers after this great change. What would France do? Tsarist Russia would be resentful, but not overtly hostile. I answered as best I could, not daring to tell him how distant and improbable this future to which he persisted in looking forward seemed to me. Yet he was right. In the following year the Chinese Empire, which had lasted for so many centuries, suddenly collapsed.

"It is not difficult to act, but to know." He always acted upon this maxim, keeping a vigilant watch over his ideas, which dictated his conduct. The six lectures which he delivered at Shanghai during the last year of his life, of which Father d'Elia, of the Society of Jesus, has provided an excellent French translation with an illuminating commentary, lay down his whole plan for the future body politic, or rather society, based on three principles, by which the people are assured of national independence, political sovereignty, and

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subsistence, in the order stated, each principle being the necessary condition of putting the next into force. Sovereignty is exercised through the vote. With the executive, legislative, and judicial powers, the Government combines those of supervision and examination, which are likewise clearly delimited and have already proved their worth in China since the beginning of the Christian era, when both censors and examinations were instituted. The censors went round inspecting the provincial governors and had the right—not always devoid of danger—of addressing respectful remonstrances to the Emperor. The object of the examinations was to fill all posts in the administration. It was not till under the Manchu dynasty that they were reduced to mere elaborations of existing traditions, permitting of no intellectual liberty. Till then, except for the errors inevitable in all human establishments, they had been beneficial to both education and individual talent.

All dynasties in China in historic times have turned their attention to providing for the subsistence of the people. Towards the end of the eleventh century of our era the Sung dynasty, rendered glorious by a brilliant renaissance of the Confucian philosophy, experimented for some years with a sort of State Socialism. But in an almost exclusively agricultural land it was of predominant importance to encourage or prescribe the planting of certain things which would not come to maturity for many years, such as trees, and to regularize prices by a better distribution of the products of the soil: at various times the Government has assumed the right to purchase surplus crops or forced people to sell them and proceeded to distribute them in those regions where demand exceeded supply, in order to check excessive speculation in either direction. In Europe the development of industry in

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the nineteenth century has raised a different question, that of the relations between capital and labour. Sun Yat-sen condemns capitalism, as putting into action the maxim that "might is right," but joins issue with Marxism, from which Russian Communism springs. He finds fault with it for accepting class war as a law of history, and even as its only law, whereas it is only a pathological accident. In a healthy society the classes live at peace together, without any necessity for putting an end to the struggle in the Russian fashion, by exterminating all of them for the benefit of the victorious proletariat. Capitalism does not yet exist in China. Instead of combating it, it will suffice to prevent it from coming into existence by a graded land-tax, by allowing the State the option of acquiring great enterprises if it so desires, and by the development of co-operation.

To call this theory utopian is to argue in its favour. A system which has no definite place reserved for it in the world as it is is *per se* a utopia. All utopias are not realized, but only a utopia has the possibility of being realized. It is the possible, and not the real, that finds realization. The first condition of existing some day is that of not yet existing.

To a Roman citizen in the time of Nero the religion of a Jewish sect which would have forced him to treat his slave as a brother would have seemed a utopia. Or, if we prefer another example, in which the intervention of Providence is less marked, the morality of Confucius was another utopia, no less shocking at the time when it was preached.

China at that time was in a state of disorder comparable to that of France under the last of the successors of Charlemagne. Since the legitimate sovereign no longer possessed more than a nominal authority, the nobles were masters, constantly at war with one another and believing themselves justified in do-



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ing exactly as they liked. The history of that period is nothing but a succession of battles and sieges, massacres and acts of treachery, in which, as an indignant moralist was to write in later days, we see "son slaying father, and subject slaying his prince." There was no check upon the fury of man's passions. Not a castle but had its scandal, whether in the form of incest or of adultery, and a song quoted by Confucius as evidence of this has as its refrain: "Things unspeakable go on in the inner apartments."

Despairing of his native land, where he remained confined to a modest office in the administration, he started out on a journey, travelling through the whole Empire in search of a nobleman who might consent to give his ideas a trial. It was a mad enterprise. How could one of those barons, as gross as those in the early centuries of the Middle Ages in Europe, but far more debauched, have accepted this rigid system which bound master to subject, brother to brother, and friend to friend in a compulsory system of mutual good treatment? After wandering in vain at the risk of his life, and sometimes of his virtue as well, Confucius returned home old and disillusioned, and in future reserved his instruction for his disciples alone, who have handed it down to posterity. Who could have believed then that three centuries later feudalism would have been destroyed, and that of the ten schools of philosophy which were disputing with one another at the time it would be that of Confucius that would be chosen to provide the restored Empire with its State system of morality.

There is another feudalism, with no roots in the past, which nowadays holds all peoples of the world at its mercy, and whose barons make war upon one another without appearing in person, hiring the nations as their mercenaries. But is not it, too, doomed to disappear one day? It is not enough, how-

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ever, to long for this day to come. We must know what to do afterwards.

We have now reached the highest terrace. But we are not alone. A group of students has just crossed the threshold, and near at hand a large family is looking out over the wide landscape, while the women and children recover their breath. Every day from morning to evening pilgrims from all parts of China gather to make the ascent of this tomb. There are notice-boards telling them to enter by the door on the left and come out through the other. Inside are two sentries on either side, seeing that the people all proceed in the same direction. They wear their country uniforms, consisting of a khaki linen tunic and polished leather shoulder-belt, and have a smart but easy bearing. As I sign my name in the visitors' book on leaving, the one standing there approaches and smiles to see me write in Chinese characters.

In accordance with the rules of Chinese architecture, the building is rectangular in form, with the shorter walls forming the sides. The nave is lofty but spacious, supported on pillars rising straight to the roof. Air and light pour in through the openings in the façade. In the middle stands the monument, the statue and bas-reliefs for which came from France, being the work of a celebrated French sculptor, M. Landowski. In them we see Sun Yat-sen departing into exile, haranguing the cheering people, and taking the oath to the Republic. But turning aside from these historic occasions, I see again in my mind's eye another episode. In a poor flat in a narrow Paris street is a room blocked by the table at which we are crowded together. Rough pottery bowls and plates hold the swallow's-nest soup, the stewed sharks' fins, the crisply browned duck, the carp with brown sauce, the stewed sea-cucumbers, the soya salad, the crab omelet, and other dainties of a Chinese

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banquet. There is no talk of politics. The disciples abandon themselves to their youthful high spirits like schoolboys on holiday; they tell anecdotes and advance paradoxes. "There is nothing uglier," says one of them, "than a nose in the middle of the face; but we have got used to it." While another amicably rallies a friend who is studying at the military academy of Saint-Cyr by quoting the Chinese rhymed proverb: "Out of bad iron one makes a nail; out of a bad man one makes a soldier." The master, whose guests we are, has seated himself as host at the end of the table, smiling benevolently and tasting every dish out of compliment to those who made it. Everybody has cooked something, for in China cookery is an art practised in good society. Yet all of them were awaiting the signal to leave in secret for their allotted posts; indeed, a few days later they had gone, with what was almost a certainty of never coming back again. How many of these merry guests are left today? "This evening we shall sup with Pluto," said Leonidas to his men in the pass of Thermopylæ, where their mess of Lacedæmonian stew was served out to them for the last time. How different were these heroes, who without any grim jests and amid the frankest gaiety enjoyed like connoisseurs the delicate bill of fare of these Chinese love-feasts, having previously vied with one another in the skilful preparation of it!

At the far end of the sanctuary people stand in reverent contemplation before the closed door of the vault with bent heads, or salute the tomb with their hands. The mortal remains of Sun Yat-sen were brought back from Pei-p'ing to Nankin and deposited here on June 1, 1929, with an imposing ceremony at which nineteen nations were represented, side by side with the members of the Government and delegations from various parts of China. The Vatican sent Monsignor

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Costantini, its Apostolic Delegate in China, whose presence, to quote the eminent prelate's precious words, were a "sign of the times" and held out prospects of happy consequences "in the near future."

Today this hill is the spiritual centre of the Chinese Republic, as the Delphic mount was to Greece. But the thought kindled there is bound to radiate still farther afield, beyond the frontiers. Confucius, Sun Yat-sen, and the whole series of Chinese moralists who have occupied the twenty-five intervening centuries agree in basing their doctrine upon the general laws applying to human nature in general, and not upon the privileges of a race, nation, or class. This model system of human relationships is not the one proposed by Confucius, for it has been necessary to allow for the change caused by Western industry. If, however, it is valid for China, it ought to work equally well in any place where men are gathered together, after allowing for the modifications required for adapting it to different ways of life or customs. From high on the terrace the fields and hills stretching away as far as the eye can see remind one of the various regions of the earth, and the individual becomes lost in humanity as a whole.



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As one comes to the town hall of Nankin, one leaves on the left a row of little buildings each of which has its door closed outside with a bolt and a round hole in the wall at the height of a man's head. These are the cells in which the candidates

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at the public examinations under the Manchu dynasty were shut up with their brushes, inkstands, and rolls of paper, the opening being used to pass them in bowls of rice.

Next a stone-paved road leads between two sheets of water to the hall of honour, where the chairs stand in rows before an enlarged photograph of Sun Yat-sen hanging on the end wall, surrounded by groups of flags in the national colours or those of the National People's party, red or blue with a twelve-rayed white sun. The same arrangement prevails in all Government offices, barracks, and schools, and it is here that the staff meet every Monday morning to make their bow to the portrait three times, after which the political testament is read out which he drew up on March 11, 1925, on the eve of his death:

"For forty years past I have devoted myself to the cause of national revolution, the aim of which is to secure for China liberty and equality. The experience I have gained during these forty years has convinced me that in order to arrive at these it is necessary to rouse the multitude of our people and enter into relations with the foreign peoples which treat us as equals, in order to fight side by side with them.

"The revolution is not complete. I recommend my comrades to conform to the instructions in my works, and labour without respite at their realization. Above all, as I recently demanded, the meeting of a general assembly and the abolition of inequitable treaties ought to be obtained in the shortest possible time. Such is my last will."

This tribute to his memory concludes with three minutes' silence.

It must be recognized that up to the present these acts of devotion have failed to work any miracle. But this is no reason for doubting its sincerity. It would certainly have been a fine

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thing to see the military leaders from the north, such as Chang Tso-lin, the ex-brigand of Manchuria who became master of Peking, voluntarily abandoning their conquered provinces and paying their millions into the treasury of the regular Government. But it took a victorious campaign, led by General Chiang Kai-shek, commander-in-chief of the Republican armies, to wring from them a precious submission. It is the National People's party, reorganized in January 1924, and disciplined on the lines of the Communist party of Russia, that is in power today. It would have been better if everybody in that party had always been of the same opinion, agreeing, in particular, to put an end to the period of political tutelage as soon as possible by proceeding to a general election, which could not have failed to produce a National Assembly which would have been a council of six or seven hundred sages. But the party in power has its radicals and its moderates. The latter, having carried the day, turned out the Communists, who have raised rebellion in several provinces of the west and centre. The radicals denounce the dictatorial proceedings of their rivals, demand the immediate summoning of the assembly, a reconciliation with the Communists, and war to the knife on Japan, which has recently attacked China in Manchuria and at Shanghai. As for the foreign powers that enjoy concessions and privileges on Chinese territory, they would have set a magnificent example of disinterestedness and generosity if they had themselves denounced the inequitable treaties which had extorted these. But with the exception of revolutionary Russia, conquered Germany, and a few States which have none but interests of a secondary order in China, they still require pressing to do so.

My old friend Li Yü-ying appears in the doorway of the charming house occupied by the mayor of Nankin and greets

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me in his unemotional voice as though we had only parted yesterday. I had been expecting to join him at Pei-p'ing in a few days' time, but a Government aeroplane set him down here yesterday evening. His advice is required. Sitting down beside me, he questions and observes me thoughtfully. His eyes, a little dimmed, rest on one gently but lingeringly, clinging to one almost palpably, like the hand of a friend who will not hear of any resistance.

It is from his father, Li Hung-tsao, a viceroy, and tutor to the Emperor, that my friend, his fifth son, inherited his refined face and secular calm, besides his share of the paternal fortune, which he has long since spent in the service of the Revolution. His vocation showed itself early, but everything was against it: his father's authority, family tradition, his habits of luxury, and court favour. The indomitable courage which broke through all these obstacles simultaneously swept him away by the same impetus to the most extreme consequences. At the side of Sun Yat-sen, whom he never ceased to support, this former aristocrat remained uncompromising to the point of intolerance. He has never drawn a step nearer to Christianity, or any other religion, accepting nothing but science as the source of all rules of conduct for the life of mankind, both outward and inward. On leaving his country he went to France to study biology and, above all, clarify his ideas. The empiricism of the Anglo-Saxons and the historical method of Karl Marx were less suited to his rigid intelligence than the geometrical reasoning applied by Descartes to the knowledge of the universe and by the eighteenth-century philosophers and nineteenth-century sociologists of France to politics and morality. He was still young and already married to a devoted wife, who bravely endured poverty with him, still further aggravated by voluntary deprivations. On grounds of

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hygiene he subjected himself to a discipline which forbade him the use of opium, tobacco, alcohol and fermented drinks, the flesh of animals, and the pleasures of the senses. What he wanted was to bring into cultivation, or at least consumption, throughout the whole world that leguminous plant resembling the chick-pea which yields abundant harvests in the north of China and Manchuria and is known in Europe under its Japanese name of soya. He had discovered not only how to use the flour prepared from it, its young shoots and fermented juice, as was already done, but also how to extract from it a sort of milk, a sort of cheese, and a compressed paste tasting like meat. Hence from this one form of produce he was capable of providing a complete diet cheaply for the whole of humanity.

In order to prove this, he set up a small factory in the neighbourhood of Paris, which unfortunately failed to cover its expenses. A little later, with the object of disseminating education among the people of China, he sent several parties of poor children to France, guaranteeing the expenses for their maintenance and education without any preliminary examination of them, for it did not seem just to him to allow those who already knew something any advantage over the unfortunates who were ignorant of everything. Divine truth can, indeed, reveal itself to the roughest minds by the aid of grace as well as to the most cultivated. But the same is not equally true of that which man invents for himself by a chain of argument, which has to be followed from beginning to end under pain of not grasping it at all.

Though as remote from each other in the objects of our faith as two persons could possibly be, we have always felt that sympathy, and even friendship, for each other which may exist between faithful adherents of different creeds. Religious,

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though without a religion, he serves science with the zeal of a bigot, the courage of a martyr, the self-mortification of an ascetic, and a confidence which will admit no doubt of its miracles. But science is incapable of inspiring these virtues of which it thus reaps the benefit, for it is only a measuring apparatus, as indifferent to good or evil as any thermometer could be to the mildness of a beautiful day, or as a microscope is to the infection which it reveals. But another source for them is to be found in his heart: it is his goodness.

Now that he is past middle age, his face is prolonged by a narrow beard like a paint-brush such as one sees in paintings of sages who have retired from the world, as they sit playing the lute at the foot of a tree or looking at a book under a veranda above which towers a rock. Vowed, like these, to meditation, he bears his own hermitage within him. It is like an audience-chamber where the sounds, words, and sights of the world venture respectfully into the presence of his unbending reason. Like them, his replies have several thresholds to cross between this perpetual silence and the tumult outside. His speech is slow, his gestures infrequent, for they come from a far distance, being handed on like orders and dictated as though to servants at his door by a hidden master. One does not argue with him, one listens.

"You are interested in the arts and politics? In what proportion? Ten per cent? Twenty per cent?" Ill-prepared for such calculations, I reply: "Fifty per cent," with a readiness which no doubt seems to him suspicious, for he looks at me and says nothing.

How am I to speak to him about Japanese aggression, which is the question of interest at the moment? I know how our Government's policy embarrasses him. He has never ceased to recommend friendship with France to China, yet today

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alone among the great powers, France is openly siding with Japan. It is not hard to guess at some interested collusion between the business men whom even the most honest statesmen are forced to obey in both countries. The great newspapers supported by these men's capital are as disgusting as they always are in their knavery and partiality. To plead the innocence of the people while blaming those who exploit its weakness and take advantage of its credulity is to arraign it while under the impression that one is defending it: when an abuse of power is the point at issue, weakness becomes guilt; intrigue has no surer accomplice than submissiveness. As the Nankin Government saw perfectly well, the only thing to do was to appeal to the League of Nations, whose power, though weak, is not negligible. China has given proofs of her patience and proved her rights. What will happen if Japan takes extreme measures? Soviet Russia will have a warlike neighbour in Manchuria, representing itself to the world as the champion of capitalism. A conflict seems inevitable.

"No doubt," he says, "every country which encroaches upon the territory of others runs the risk of being checked and thrown back one day, sometimes even of being invaded in its turn. If this punishment does not come from without, there is another that is even surer. Victory is a poison owing to the pride and wealth which it brings to the stronger. The military party and the capitalist class will tip the balance of internal equilibrium in their own favour, and Japan will be more and more troubled by disorders." He quotes two maxims concentrated into four words by the ancient sages. One defines the order of society, the other the effects of war; the former is: "Everyone gets his right place"; the latter: "Double defeat, evils shared."

But now comes an interruption. A middle-aged man whose

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round face is expressive of strength and uprightness leaves the door open for two servants who carry in his companion, lying inert on a litter, then lift him up and place him carefully in an armchair. About the twentieth century before the Christian era history records a case of paralysis of one side which left one of the most virtuous of China's emperors with the use of only one arm and one leg. His reign was a golden age, in which it would never have occurred to anyone to pick up anything dropped in the road or to shut the door on leaving his house. This former warrior of the Chinese Republic, whose eyes flash brightly in his rugged, petrified face, is suffering from a different disease, which makes his body like a corpse, without its rigidity. But his spirit is wide awake, having nothing to distract it, and feeds upon itself like an immaterial flame. I shall not be present at the council of the three sages. I know that they have only enough time to concert matters between themselves before the Government committees at which they will spend the day. The system of government founded by Sun Yat-sen insists upon discussion. A minister may not take any step without the advice of his counsellors, or complete any piece of work before it has been passed by the Council of State. He is bound to be present at the meetings of the Central Political Council, the Central Executive Council, and the Executive Council, which take place on fixed days weekly. But he has two assistants, the first of whom may take his place on committees and councils, and the other in the offices of his department. French ministers do not possess this facility, yet are they not summoned from their offices more frequently to defend themselves before the Chambers or explain their views before committees? One advantage enjoyed by the Chinese constitution is that the supervisory machinery is brought into play before a decision is arrived at. Under a parliamentary

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régime it often happens that a measure which has been subjected to a thorough preliminary examination is suddenly thrown out, thus rendering these long negotiations fruitless. A famous example is that of President Wilson, who, after collaborating with the Allied ministers in framing the Treaty of Versailles, failed to obtain a favourable vote from the United States Senate. A Chinese minister awaits instructions, he is only a mandatary and does not in any case possess full powers. Foreigners lose patience and would like to cut short these interminable discussions. In China time is not money, to be earned minute by minute, as in America, but a current which may carry a man far when he knows how to yield to it.

This afternoon at the French Consulate, where I have been enjoying most kindly hospitality, I pack up my possessions, with the addition of the presents which I have just received at the Conservatoire of Music: a long case of flutes and an ancient lute, carefully wrapped up in a cover. It is said that a famous musician of the sixteenth century, a prince of the Imperial Ming family, played upon it with his noble fingers. I did not expect to see Mr. Li again here, but he pays me a surprise visit. He has managed to get away for a few moments and brings me some letters which he has just written to his fellow-officials at Pei-p'ing, who are charged with my reception and have themselves been warned by telegram and a letter dispatched by the mail-plane. To help me find my way about during the first few days, he has also drawn a plan of the buildings in which quarters have been reserved for me, and another one for my walks in the neighbourhood. "We have done our best to provide you with the comfort to which you are accustomed," he says, "but it is only a first attempt. You will find many deficiencies. I beg you to point them out in our own interest,

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so that we may learn." Speaking no more rapidly than usual, but without stopping, he pours out his advice and leaves me, wishing me a pleasant journey with a radiant smile, before I have been able to tell him how deeply touched I am. From this time onwards, he says, he will be able to follow me in thought and inquire without too much anxiety how I am getting on almost daily.



## THE COUNTRYSIDE

The morning sunshine strikes across the empty railway-tracks and casts upon the platform the shadow of the train, through which children are running, raising at arm's length baskets of cucumbers and bundles of newspapers. The name of the station is Süchow, inscribed on the wooden signboard just as it was in olden days in the *Tribute of Yü*, a register of the products of China ascribed to a legendary Emperor, and possibly dating from thirty centuries ago. During the night we have been travelling steadily northwards, going farther and farther away from the Yangtze; but this region, like Shanghai and Nankin, still belongs to the province of Kiangsu.

It was not a very pleasant experience yesterday evening when we had to cross a great river in order to reach the station and the Pekin express on the other side. In changing from one boat into the other I thought I had lost my cigarette-case, and my regret for this little servant, which had come such a distance only to drown itself in the livid waters, spoilt my pleasure

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in the safety of the railway-car, until it reappeared, having got into the wrong pocket in the excitement of the departure and the crossing.

The lower parts of the town were still flooded. On the plank gangways which took the place of sidewalks the passers-by were marking time in an unbroken line, one behind another. When our automobile had water up to the axles we had to accept the services of the boatmen who now came up, and, getting into their flat-bottomed boats, let ourselves be conveyed down the street to the flooded platform in the station. Little ragamuffins up to the neck in water were playing about and splashing one another as though they were in the bath. A respectful son was carrying an old lady, seated impassively astride upon his shoulders with her legs sticking straight out. Housewives were returning from market hugging their parcels to their bosom as if they had been children. People splashed along making way for one another and exchanging jovial greetings. The good people of China, like those of France, are always ready for a joke.

We are now in the full stream of the river, whose surface is choppy as the result of a contrary wind. To reach the Government launch which is waiting for me we have to go round a great steamship. On passing out of the shelter of its hull our boat catches the wind abeam and wobbles a little, but the skilful boatman has soon brought it round head on to the waves. A few moments later we are seated at our ease in wicker arm-chairs on the forward deck of the little ship before a table on which the yellow tea is steaming, while the engines are being started. "I was frightened," says my companion. I know that this most amiable and distinguished official is capable of undaunted courage in the service of his country. Like him I saw that the boat was on the point of capsizing. I dreaded an acci-

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dent, but was not afraid, like children who fall down and then protest that they have not hurt themselves, while keeping back their tears.

The feudal system, which is more recent in our country than in China, has left us with a feeling that it is our duty always to put a good face on things, like a soldier under arms—an excellent rule in the presence of an enemy against whom we have to hold our own. But one cannot cow the waves of a river or the typhoid bacillus.

During the fighting outside Shanghai, a battalion commander asked for sixty volunteers for a mission involving certain death. The whole battalion volunteered twice in succession till they had to draw lots. The mission was to crawl up to the Japanese lines in the darkness, each man carrying a row of bombs round his body which would explode when hit by the bullets and grenades, and it was carried out. Near the harbour of that city a taxi-driver was commandeered by a Japanese corporal and four men for the purpose of transporting some cases of munitions. Revolver in hand, the corporal got up on the seat next the driver, with the soldiers on the running-boards, but the man drove his cab straight on into the river, where it sank with them all. The history of China is full of similar incidents, and the more recent of them surprised none but foreigners, who are ignorant of this fact.

Some travellers—Americans, no doubt—rosy-faced, fair-haired, and dressed in natural-coloured cloth, get down to stretch their legs and, having boarded the train as it starts again, go back to their compartment without a glance at me, as if I were a piece of furniture. If any Chinese pass along the corridor, they apologize for disturbing me, and we enter into conversation. They all tell me politely how congenial they find the French, but I feel that I do not quite carry conviction

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when I assure them that the feeling is mutual. They would like, if not proofs, at least some sign of it, like those of which other countries are not niggardly. One of them is a railway inspector, another secretary to a provincial Government. All of them have studied in the United States and give me discreetly to understand that that is where China finds its real friends. I decide to return to my sleeping-compartment, where all is in readiness.

"The Japanese—what a calamity! Have you any news?" asks the sleeping-car attendant, who has come to feel the teapot placed on the slab before me and find whether it is still hot, for he has seen me buying some newspapers. I hand them to him, but he would also like to know my own views on the subject. "Will the League of Nations do anything for us?" To this question in which he is interested I can reply unhesitatingly that China's rights over her territory cannot fail to be recognized by a just tribunal.

He listens to me, his features tense with concentration, nods his thanks, and goes off taking with him both teapot and newspapers, which he will read with his colleagues at the end of the corridor, where, a few moments later, I come upon a serried group of them. He has also taken them my words, like a bonbon melting between his closed lips which he means to share with them.

Patriotism is equally disseminated through all classes of Chinese society, but except in that class which has adopted foreign ideas, the cult of it is a part of private life. A Chinese belongs to his family, his village, and the house in which he finds work—supported by the master, who takes the place of a father to him—to his guild, his province, and his nation. These concentric groups are inseparable, growing out of one another by a natural process of relationship. The nation is one,

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like a great family containing all others within it, and is venerated as an ancestor of ancestors. The idea of the State is not inherent in this system. The theorists of the monarchy introduced it by taking as their model the structure of the family: leader, magistrate, governor, viceroy, and emperor possess authority each in his successive grade in the hierarchy, but each has also the duty of a father towards his children. This ideal government was that of the legendary emperors. It is to the honour of China that in later ages it afterwards approximated to it under its most glorious reigns. But as each dynasty became decadent, it departed farther and farther from it. When the Manchu dynasty began to become corrupt during the last century, it was further reproached with its foreign origin, thanks to which it had no legitimate claims. Since that time the people have acquired the habit of relying only upon themselves and have continued to do so because the Republican Government has not yet succeeded in inspiring them with confidence. If the fatherland is threatened, they will take up arms to defend it. Before Shanghai country farmers and work-girls from the poorer quarters of the city were seen taking rifles from the soldiers who had fallen on the field of battle in order to fight the invader. In Manchuria the fugitives from justice and vagabonds who had found a refuge in that land formed bands of irregulars which harried the Japanese detachments and supply-trains, without prejudice to their custom of pillaging travellers when occasion offered. They are sincerely patriotic brigands, just as in the religion of India there are pious demons, which say their prayers and do penance for their sins.

In other circumstances the people of China have recourse to other methods of opposing the national enemy, such as boycotting its commercial houses. Japan, which cannot sell its cotton stuffs and hardware anywhere but in China, is suffering

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losses which it feels all the more keenly because it is not rich. It forwards protests to the Chinese Government, which is powerless to stop the boycott, for it is not the Government which gave the signal for action. Nobody knows where it comes from, but it spreads instantaneously by means of trade guilds, families—in fact, through every channel of this homogeneous but well-articulated mass, as water is sucked up by a sponge. China is accused of hating foreigners, but wrongly so. Its morality prescribes the same duties towards all men. It is not the foreigner whom it hates, but he who injures the country: the Mongol or Manchu who usurped the throne, or, in the nineteenth century, the European who makes war in order to establish himself as master on the territory of the Empire. Nowadays he knows how to distinguish between nations overseas and treat each one on its merits.

We shall not reach Pei-p'ing till eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. The heavy cars run noiselessly. The sun has now left my window and is sweeping through the corridor. I spend the day between a cigarette and a cup of tea, contemplating the landscape which passes by in the leisurely calm of its vast expanse. This is Shantung, the famous province in which Confucius was born. Plains like a lake of brown earth stretch away to the foot of the jagged mountain ridges. Sheaves of sorghum, millet, corn, and barley are heaped up at the edge of the fields or stacked near the houses. This is the second crop, intended for home consumption. The soil is already prepared for sowing with wheat, which will be sold at the end of next summer, if it please Heaven and the river. Narrow furrows, without a sign of a weed, traced with the regularity of a rake by the plough with its pointed share. To leave more room for the fields, the houses huddle together in hamlets built of sun-dried clay or large stone-built villages, where the walls enclosing each house

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with its piece of land are continuous, running along the streets as in cities. But every one of them has its trees, yielding both shade and fruit, between courtyard and garden. Sometimes there is a detached farm with its walled enclosure adjoining it, like the "*meix*" of Franche-Comté, where, too, as here, the fields are fringed with trees. The fruit, looking like fairy lights among the foliage, resembles tomatoes in shape and colour; it is the *shib-tzu*, known in Europe and even introduced into the southern parts of France, under the Japanese name of *kaki*, and full of a deliciously cool juice.

Scattered about the countryside, clumps of willows cast their shade over turfed enclosures in which the earth is thrown up as though great moles had been tunnelling there. They are tombs, placed there as the result of calculations for discovering which influences are most propitious. The farmer who will not waste an inch of ground elsewhere traces a furrow round these out of respect.

The mountains, which in this region had been fertile and densely inhabited for many centuries, have been cleared for timber. Yet if there is a chapel on a peak, rows of pine-trees and arbor-vitæ cover the slope leading up to it at a sufficient distance from one another to show through the gaps the road leading round the hill, opening up wide prospects at every turn. Farther in the distance they rise in sharp but massive ridges, one supporting the other, with their far-stretched foothills firmly based upon the plain, violet in the shadows and washed with orange in the sun, like some rich material falling in stiff folds. The hills are clothed with majesty.



FIRST DAY IN PEI-P'ING

September as it wanes has withered the leaves of the water-lilies on the lake separating us from the imperial residence, known as the Forbidden City. But the broad spreading leaves still protect the calm waters against the autumn wind. The wall, purple beneath a cloudless sky, finds in it an unruffled mirror.

On the western shore, leaving behind us the paved roadway which separates us from the southern lake and without pausing at the landing-stage, sheltered by a bamboo canopy, we follow a majestic avenue of elms and sycamores towards the marble bridge, curved like a bow, the arch of which opens upon the northern lake. Beyond rises the lofty tower of the church built by a Manchu Emperor for the rites of Tibetan Buddhism, beloved of that dynasty. Pale as an apparition and standing posted there, like a foreign sentinel, beneath its helmet-like roof which rises in a spire, it looks incongruous with this scene of pleasure. My quarters are quite near here, among the glazed roofs which peep through the trees above their enclosing wall. I went out without difficulty through the fortified postern gate guarded only by an attendant of what is now a public garden. In former days, no doubt, it was necessary to wear at one's belt a badge of office of jade or bronze which was shown to the officer on guard, for nobody lived here who had not some office about the court. Nowadays these buildings, where Mr.

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Li Yü-ying has had a set of rooms arranged for me, belong to the university.

This morning at eight o'clock the train stopped and I was awakened by a policeman who stood at the door of my compartment, saying only one word: "*P'ien-tzŭ!* Ticket!" First I showed my railway-ticket, composed of several pieces of card for the different stages of the journey and the hire of sleeping-berths, and then my passport. Drawn up stiffly in his greenish uniform, he shook his head, and I began to feel uneasy. The guard hurried up and made my excuses: "*Pu ming*," he said; "He does not understand." But the other, faithful to his orders, persisted in repeating: "*P'ien-tzŭ*." The only thing to do was to offer him my visiting-card, though, I thought, what use would that be to him? I might even seem to be making fun of him. However, as soon as he saw me take one of these little slips of card out of my pocket-book, he took it, thanked me with an approving nod, and disappeared. Then, and not till then, could I look at the Chinese crowd, mingled with Europeans, thronging the platform outside and going up and down the steps leading to the bridges, and read on the nearest sign-board: "Tientsin Central." We were entering the province of Pei-p'ing, known nowadays as Ho-pei (north of the river) and with a better reputation than any other province for its good police, one of whom has just taken my name and positively gone off with it.

"And that," says the friend to whom I am talking, "is why incest between names is the worst of all." Indeed, the traditional marriage customs still observed among the people admit of no dispensation when the two families bear the same name, even if their pedigree indicates no community of blood, however far back it is traced, a case frequently arising in this land

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where there are few surnames, and those almost the same in all provinces. The reason for this is that the name is not an arbitrary sign, but an emanation from a man's being, imprisoned in a word. We hold the same belief, when it is a question of defending the honour of a blameless name. But in China names have their own morality. On the tablets sacred to ancestors, as in the official places of worship, the name is sufficient, the portrait being of secondary importance, and this is how the land came to be preserved from idolatry.

No better promenade for philosophers could be desired than this avenue. On this occasion—which is probably not a common one—they are two Europeans. But Witold Jablonski is more than a philosopher: he is a humanist, with a horizon far wider than that of France, which is almost always bounded by classical antiquity, for from the natural observatory formed by his own country, before visiting China his thought had made the round of Europe, the great literatures of which he knows in their original languages. And he is more than a humanist. He is a Polish nobleman. He who has not known a Pole of noble—that is, of pure—descent has yet to make the acquaintance of a rare blend of wit and pride, charm and magnificence. From Paris, where I made his acquaintance, he went to Pei-p'ing a year ago. He is a lecturer at one of the universities and has quarters in the "house for Chinese students who have returned from Europe and America." He has never been inside one of those shops full of knick-knacks for tourists known in the British jargon as "curios." I could find no better companion for such days as this, when my program consists in not having any.

The marble bridge leads through a monumental gate in the outer wall to the avenue running beside a straight canal, the outermost defence of the fortifications. This is the inner citadel,

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a rectangle with its four sides facing the cardinal points, and further protected at the corners by bastions. It is as large as a city, for it encloses the palaces forming the Emperor's residence, the gardens for him to walk in, and the throne-room. Nowadays the abode of the sovereign belongs to the nation, like the Louvre in Paris. The sentinel on guard at the four fortified gates, whose double roofs mark the centre of its four sides, makes a charge for admission and regulates a peaceful invasion, which is allowed to walk round, in one direction only, past the treasures of which it can take possession only by the eye: furniture, pictures, written maxims, bronze and jade vessels, pools, pavilions, secular trees, and abodes of majesty, standing in sovereign calm at the head of their marble flights of steps, all on view to the public like exhibits in a museum. Students stroll slowly by, stopping, like us, to decipher the poems written on the sky in the paintings of landscapes; for Chinese painting is not content, like ours, with the virtue of resemblance; out of natural objects it composes symphonies which inspire the artist himself or one of his lettered friends with these verses. As the work subsequently passes from hand to hand, it is often enriched with other poetical commentaries signed and adorned with their seal by those who have loved it. Chinese script, richer and more flexible than ours, adapts itself to the design of the picture.

Calligraphy is an art in itself, and on these white scrolls we see real masterpieces of it, written in ample characters with no support save that of the words which they trace and their meaning. *Feng ku*: the wind and the skeleton. By this double metaphor Chinese criticism indicates the virtues which ought to be combined in composition. The wind of thought bears the line, straight as an arrow shot vertically into the air, then suddenly twists it without breaking it, ties a knot in it, and either

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leaves it floating in the air or compresses it like a club. The skeleton stands firm; scattered or piled up, cast hither or thither—though always in the same order—here are the rib and the tibia, the vertebra and the knee-cap, in a solid, brilliant black on which the brush pauses before resuming its course, marked only by a filmy trace. The line contracts and expands, and the eye, as it follows it, transmits its vibration to the heart.

"To direct the brush according to the vital rhythm." This is an ancient precept, now fifteen centuries old, yet still observed by painters. The act of writing helps us to understand this. Beings and things are the characters in a pictorial alphabet; as the artist copies them, the movement of his brush defines their significance. A picture has to be read as one reads a poem. Inert space only acquires life if it becomes a progress, inscribed in time.

"Here! Come and sit down!" The raucous voice makes us turn our heads, but it is not we who are being hailed by the jovial goodwife who, taking advantage of a moment when the attendant is not there, has plumped herself down on a yellow silk sofa, formerly, as the colour indicates, reserved for the Imperial family. She is calling her son, or her son-in-law, the young man carrying a thermos bottle slung across his shoulder, containing tea for their expedition. He obeys, followed by his chubby little wife, flanked by two children. They find this game less amusing than their parents and grandmother, who salute one another with derisive smiles, as happy to be seated upon this august piece of furniture as were the sans-culottes who lounged in the armchairs on that day of riot at the Tuileries when they forced Louis XVI to don the red cap of revolution. Thus does the oppressed people take its revenge.

Following the stream of sightseers, we reach the exit and have only to walk along the avenue to reach solitude again.



### First Day in Pei-p'ing

The gate opposite the one in the fortifications leads into what was once a garden belonging to the palace, now a public garden, on a hill with three peaks, each crowned with a belvedere. It is called the *Ching Shan*, or Prospect Hill, or, by a popular error, *Mei Shan*, the coal mountain, and under the Ming dynasty it was known as the *Wan Shui Shan*, the Mountain of the Ten Thousand Years, or in other words, of the Emperor. The carefully sanded walks mount gently upwards between the arbor-vitæ, whose boles, fissured by age, still put forth green branches. We meet a few people sauntering along, but they do not interrupt their musings by so much as a glance at us. Others, resting by the side of the avenue on seats like those in the Luxembourg, let us pass like shadows across their field of vision.

We shall go no farther, for we see that it would be tiring, and are both of the opinion that to see things well it is not necessary to see everything. On the eastern slope, near the path which brings us back again, there is an open space surrounded by a wooden fence, where one of the trees like the others which we still see died during the last century, loaded with chains to expiate the crime of *lèse majesté*. On one of the great branches which sprout from the trunk like ribs from a pillar supporting the vaulted roof of dark needles, the last Emperor of the Ming dynasty hanged himself on the morning of April 9 in the year 1644, for insurrection had triumphed in the capital. At dawn, as was the custom, the bell had tolled to summon the council of ministers, but none of them had appeared. The palace was empty: all had fled or gone over to the enemy. On the robe that clothed the Emperor's dead body was written in letters of blood the following decree: "Through the lukewarmness of my virtue and the weakness of my nature I have incurred guilt towards most high Heaven. So my minis-

### *First Day in Pei-p'ing*

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ters have deceived me in all things. As I die I dare not look my ancestors in the face. With my own hands I take off the Imperial diadem and veil my face in my hair, content that the rebels may cut me to pieces so long as they do not ill-treat a single one of the people."

When the Manchu dynasty fell in turn, in 1911, the heir to the throne could hardly immolate himself to save the nation, for he was a child of four. While the other princes of the family retained their residences in the city, and still occupy them, though in a greatly reduced style, he received an endowment from the Republic sufficient to keep up a house, first here and afterwards at Tientsin, in which no pleasure was lacking when he arrived at man's estate. By accepting the position of the new Emperor of Manchuria since the Japanese army severed it from China, he has behaved as the son of Napoleon III would have done if in 1872 he had received a kingdom in Alsace from Prussia, or, conversely, as the Crown Prince of Germany would have done if France had granted him the same favour in 1919. One of his wives, chosen in 1923 from a good family of Manchu origin, left him a year ago, threatening that if he tried to keep her she would bring a suit for divorce against him, on grounds of cruelty, of which she could produce proofs. In order to avert this scandal, an amicable agreement was arrived at by which she was allowed a pension of five thousand Chinese dollars—that is, about three thousand American dollars—a month. But having since left Tientsin for Manchuria, sure of impunity, the young sovereign repudiated his signature. Representations were necessary from certain partisans of a restoration who still linger on in China, as well as the personal intervention of a prince of the Imperial family, before the debt was paid.

Mr. Li Yü-ying had been quite right when I was in Nankin

The Abode of Happiness

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to give me a plan of the buildings in which I was to live, and it was very wrong of me to leave it on my table when I went out. It was impossible to mistake the postern gate, but beyond that every building has its red-painted door, exactly like its neighbours, with the same flight of three steps leading up to it, and protected at an equal distance by a carved stone screen to stop the ghosts, for they cannot get past this obstacle. When we approach the door, the signboards undeceive us. One announces a technical institute, the other a Government office. In vain do we walk twice up and down the avenue. We have to consult a policeman, who listens to us, grave and decorous as they all are in China, and then, having cogitated a moment, sends us down a similar avenue parallel to this one. The porter under the canopy at the door, who saw me for the first time a few hours earlier, recognizes and salutes me.



## *THE ABODE OF HAPPINESS*

“Was the bread not good? Yet I got it from a French bakery.” I manage to dissolve another slice in my last cup of tea, so as not to hurt the servant told off to wait upon me, who is standing rigid with respect three paces away like a soldier before his commanding officer, though with his black robe, his shaven head, and the contrite expression due to his drooping eyelids, he is more like some lay brother grown to maturity in the devout atmosphere of the cloister and piously punctilious in his modest but necessary task.

He was waiting outside my bedroom window for me to

## *The Abode of Happiness*

wake, in the carved wooden gallery with panels painted in two colours only, azure blue and coral pink. I give him my instructions for the day. He assumes his responsibilities by repeating after me that I have a guest coming at noon, that I shall not be dining here this evening, and that I want an automobile at ten o'clock.

His perfect honesty makes it unnecessary for me to trouble about locking drawers, and if I tell him to buy stamps or a package of cigarettes, he at once presents me with the bill, written in a minute script, not without a certain elegance. At whatever time of day or night I come in, I have hardly crossed the first courtyard before I see him hurrying up. He greets me without obsequiousness, by a slight inclination of the head, laying his hands flat on his breast, and supports me by the elbow, as is the rule with an elderly man or master, as I ascend the three steps at each successive door. I have hardly hung up my coat before he brings me a teapot full of hot tea.

The building in which I have my quarters forms the western side of the third courtyard, square and paved with slabs, but planted with crab-apple trees. In the morning I see the young servants jumping up at the spreading branches to gather the scarlet fruits, barely larger than cherries. The roof is of glazed tiles, supported upon beams which are visible from outside. But the room is now closed in by a ceiling panelled with varnished wood in the English fashion, as are also the walls. At the far end of the room another partition of equally recent date shuts off the bathroom. The furniture, like that of the adjoining dining-room, was made in China, but in the European style. These buildings have been handed over to the National Academy of Pei-p'ing, founded and directed by Mr. Li Yü-ying. But in giving my address to a rickshaw-man, chauffeur, or tradesman, it is necessary to use its old name, to which

## *The Abode of Happiness*

people are still accustomed: *Chung Hai, Fu Lu Chü*—Central Lake, the Abode of Happiness.

Who lived in these light dwellings in former days? I like to imagine the women of the palace, who, to quote the annalists, were "nurtured together," several in the same house, obliged, as one of them who was unhappy says, "to dress behind curtains." The poem in which this touch is to be found dates from the second century before the Christian era, and it was one of the last emperors of the Manchu dynasty who had these urns set up before the gallery, overflowing with stone fruit and bunches of grapes, like some offering to Pomona in the Trianon gardens. The buildings are no older than these, but court customs changed little in the course of the centuries, especially in the women's apartments. Under the eye of the eunuchs, an institution dating back two thousand years and lasting down to the revolution of 1911, how could these secluded women occupy their time except in intrigue and gossip, or, if they were educated, with music and poetry, and, above all, the care of their beauty? Now and then one of them would be noticed by the Emperor and pass one day through the door in a purple wall, across a lake filled with water-lilies. There, if she found favour with the Emperor, she was heaped with presents and honours, and might hope to bear a son who would become the heir presumptive, thus conferring upon her the rank of Empress Dowager. Women have always exerted a great influence on the politics of China. Some were illustrious, others disastrous. Many have owed their elevation to no more than this concatenation of circumstances, as was also the case with the Regent Tzu Hsi, who held sway during the last days of the Empire and surprised the world by the vigour of her character.

But it might also happen that the sovereign's favour was ephemeral. She was then obliged to return to this idle, care-free

## *She Who Never Smiles*

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existence, which so many others, forced to work and old before their time, might well envy. Such was the fate of the poetess when the two children whom she had borne to the Emperor died in infancy:

The life of man—has but one season,
It passes away—like the billows of the sea.
I obtained—the supreme favour,
Lost in the crowd—at the height of felicity,
I cherish in my heart—the perfection of joy,
And happiness—that knows no end.
Lamentations of women—deserted, abandoned
These have been—always.

Thus she consoled herself for her sorrow by her eternal memories. The verses, in accordance with the fashion of the day, have a strong *cæsura*, but to close her elegy she managed to devise a rhythm which dwindles and dies away with a somewhat careless and disdainful grace. And the word she uses to express happiness, *fu lu*, is the one still applied today to the Abode of Happiness, *Fu Lu Chü*.



SHE WHO NEVER SMILES

The first of the twenty-four official historians of China, the annalist-in-chief to the Imperial court towards the end of the second century before the Christian era, records the misadventure of the King of Yu, of the Chou dynasty. In the third year

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of his reign—that is, in the year 778 before the birth of Christ—he fell so deeply in love with a favourite named Pao Ssü that he went so far as to degrade the Empress and the heir presumptive and confer these titles upon Pao Ssü and the child she had just borne him. His annalist-in-chief, having consulted the ancient archives, announced: “The dynasty is ruined!”

The archives were in excellent order at that period, so that it was possible to state on the strength of them that two dragons had appeared in the audience-chamber in the Imperial palace after the death of Hsia Hou, who had founded the first of the hereditary dynasties towards the twentieth century before the Christian era. “We are the princes of Pao,” they said. This region, whose name has survived to the present day, is to be found in the modern province of Shansi, which then formed the western limit of the Empire. The Emperor consulted the auguries. Ought he to slay the dragons, drive them away, or keep them? To all three questions he received an ill-omened answer. He then inquired whether he ought to collect the foam that dripped from them, and the reply was favourable. The dragons were informed of this by a notice posted up on the wall, and disappeared after the foam had been collected and enclosed in a casket, which was handed down to the next dynasty, that of the Yin, and then to that of the Chou, founded in the twelfth century before our era. But towards the end of King Li’s reign, during the closing years of the ninth century, somebody was induced by curiosity to open it. The foam poured all over the paved floor of the room and could not be collected again. The Emperor in alarm had recourse to a magic spell. The dragon’s foam is an emanation of its vital spirit. It is charged with the male or positive principle and will be attracted by its opposite. And so the women were summoned and told to undress and cry aloud in unison. The foam was now

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transformed into a lizard, which ran into the inner apartments. A little girl of seven happened to meet it on the way. She became a woman and had a child, but, being overcome by fear, she abandoned it in the open country. Ching Hsüan, who succeeded his father in that year, heard one day that some little girls were singing a catch the words of which were: "Bow of wild mulberry-wood, quiver of wicker, portend the ruin of the dynasty." It was believed at that time, and indeed for a long time afterwards, that beneath their apparent absurdity children's songs concealed grave omens. A poor man and his wife were found who sold bows of mulberry-wood and wicker quivers. Orders were given to put them to death, but they succeeded in making their escape.

During the night they heard a baby wailing by the roadside. It was a little girl only a few days old. The worthy couple took pity on her and took her with them, continuing on their way without stopping till they reached the land of Pao, where she was adopted by a man and wife. She was the child who had been abandoned by the young girl in the palace. As she grew up, she developed a rare beauty.

The people of Pao, having had some trouble with the Imperial authorities, resolved to make amends for their misdeeds by sending the young girl to the palace as an offering. Thus it came to pass that the King of Yu took her as his favourite under the name of Pao Ssü.

She was heaped with presents, and favours were showered upon her. She accepted them all, but always remained grave and unmoved. One day the Emperor, at a loss to think of anything that might win a smile from her, took it into his head to light great fires of wolves' dung. Its flames by night and its smoke by day served as an alarm signal to call out his vassals with their armed followers. They hurried to the spot,

She Who Never Smiles

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only to have it explained to them that it was a mistake. This time Pao Ssü burst into fits of laughter at seeing their discomfiture, and the Emperor was weak enough to repeat this miserable jest twice more in order to please her.

But the legitimate Empress, whom he had deprived of her rights, had gone to seek aid beyond the western frontiers among the savage tribes which had the dog as their totem or ancestral animal. They were formidable archers. When they invaded the Empire, the Emperor had the fires lit to summon his vassals, but nobody came, for by this time they no longer believed in the signal. He was slain, his palace was sacked, and the beautiful Pao Ssü was carried away captive to the land of the dog-men.

A portrait which I saw today in the Museum prompted me to read this story again. By comparison with such remote antiquity it dates merely from yesterday, for the Princess Sha Hsiang-fei died in 1758. It was easy to recognize its period from the brightness of the colour and the precision of the drawing, with its rather mannered grace which might have taken lessons from the court of Louis XV. Though this does not apply to material things, every century is, as it were, a season, whose influence extends to more than one climate. The Middle Ages in China, as in France, had their crenellated fortifications and romances of chivalry. The romance of the *Three Kingdoms* has remained popular, for the admirable examples of heroism and fidelity that it contains. In the eighteenth century the same atmosphere of gallantry prevailed in both Europe and Asia.

Here, however, the bow and quiver were not the attributes of a mythological fable, as on a canvas of Lancret or Boucher. They were in harmony with the proud spirit of that finely-cut face, with head thrown back above the shapely form, and the

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challenge in the eyes whose glance darted like lightning from beneath the long lashes. No doubt this young woman, too, whose tightly compressed lips never knew a smile, had the dragon's foam in her veins.

The Emperor Kao Tsung, known to lovers of porcelain by his posthumous name of Ch'ien Lung, had a reign equal both in length and in glory to that of Shêng Tsu or K'ang Hsi, the contemporary of Louis XIV. In spite of the foreign origin of their dynasty he followed his ancestor's example, and was deeply imbued with the Chinese tradition, of which he constituted himself an eloquent defender in his edicts. A copious and facile poet, he was a clever "writer" in the sense still enjoyed by this word in a land where calligraphy is an art. Some scrolls in this same room, on which his august hand has traced moral maxims, bear witness to his vigorous talent by the fire of their touch, their delicate, tapering points, and the richness of their black strokes.

He was also a great conqueror, who extended the frontiers of the Empire far into central Asia. Thus in the twentieth year of his reign he was induced to send an expedition against a prince of Turkestan. But insufficient precautions were taken and the effectives were inadequate, so the column was massacred. More than one great power has made similar miscalculations in its expeditions to distant parts. China was a great power. She persevered, and more skilful strategy brought her complete victory. The prince was able to escape with the remnant of his army. The princess, who had stayed bravely in her castle, was taken prisoner and brought to the court of Peking, where the fame of her beauty had preceded her. The Emperor found her even more charming than he had expected. It was he who called her Hsiang-fei, the perfumed lady. For it seems that this wild flower exhaled a delicious fragrance.

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But, faithful to her own country and its memories, she remained shy and untamed amid the splendours of the court, not deigning even to rise at his approach. He spoke to her gently, apologizing for the injury which political necessity forced him to inflict upon her country, but he received not a word in reply. He could easily have used force, but he did not wish to obtain any favours from her except those dictated by her feelings. So the Imperial lover pleaded with his rebellious captive in a scene which might have been borrowed from some tragedy of Voltaire's, were it not that it occurs in the Chinese drama founded on this story, which, it is said, has as its author a general of the old régime, who has rallied to the Republic.

The other palace ladies did not understand this rejection of a favour of which they were jealous. When they advised her to submit, the foreigner became so furious that she drew a dagger from her bosom and threatened them with it. The Empress Dowager was now alarmed for her son's life and took advantage of a night when he was away hunting to "make a present of death" to the perfumed lady—to use the courtly Chinese expression.



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Most of my friends pity me for living in an out-of-the-way quarter. I have an automobile at my disposal, but when the distance is not too great I prefer to send for one of those two-wheeled vehicles drawn by a man which the French call

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"pousses," the English "rickshaws," and the Chinese "foreign carriages," or *yang ch'ê*, because they came from Japan, some fifty years ago. Some eighty thousand rickshaw-men are to be found in Pei-p'ing. Like French street pedlars, they hire from contractors the conveyances by which they make their living. Except for those fortunate ones who enter the service of private houses, they earn barely enough to keep them from starvation. As a rule they have no family, and spend the whole day in the street, with no clothing but their short breeches and cotton tunic; many have no home at night but the place where their carriage is kept. In winter their fares are fewer owing to the cold, from which there is no protection in these baskets on wheels, and since they themselves are still more exposed to it between the shafts, they are decimated by tuberculosis and pneumonia. It is rare for a man employed at this occupation to survive the age of forty. Others fill the vacant places, keeping the numbers of this wretched, yet harmless, class at the same level. The fare is a matter for bargaining, varying between ten and fifty cents in American money, according to distance. Once an agreement has been arrived at, no dispute ever arises and no extra payment is demanded on arrival. There is no occasion for the police to intervene.

The police are numerous and vigilant, being always stationed at the intersection of the spacious and well-kept avenues which cut across the city from north to south and from east to west. With their white-gloved hands and outstretched arms to indicate when the way is free, they are like uniformed semaphores. As a rule they have only to deal with minor offences, for crossing at the wrong time or place, or parking in forbidden places. In the populous quarters, where the sidewalks of beaten earth are thronged with a working-class crowd, I never saw a drunken man or witnessed a brawl, or even a

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violent altercation. Yet voices were raised among the groups, there was jesting, and quarrelling too, while at times coarse language would be exchanged which made the bystanders laugh, but the quarrel went no further.

One evening I hailed a rickshaw-man to take me out to dine with a friend at no great distance away. When I told him the name of the street, he replied: "Which one?" Pei-p'ing resembles London in that there are streets of the same name in different parts of the city. I could not tell him, so I had to trust to his instinct. We trotted on from street to street, carriages became more and more infrequent, and the houses lower and lower. I stopped him, and we were immediately surrounded by a helpful crowd. I remembered that the house was near the Law Schools, but nobody knew the Law Schools. We had to start off again, and soon I heard the whistle of a train. We were approaching one of the railroad tracks which encircle the city, so we were hopelessly lost. The street was now only a rough road, full of ruts and bordered by hovels. Dutifully, but without conviction, the man stopped at last before one of these which bore the required number, and looked questioningly at me. A ruddy glow filtered under the door, and the wild beat of a tambourine could be heard through the crumbling plaster walls. I hesitated to get out, but could not hurt my rickshaw-man's feelings. A passer-by extricated me from my quandary by telling me that that was the tanners' quarter. No doubt one of them was beating animals' hides in this witches' den. Nothing remained but to retrace our steps. I was delighted to recognize my own quarters again. The chauffeur was waiting for instructions before the door. As he had driven me to the place before, he looked contemptuously at his humble rival, who had to be pressed to accept the fare for the double journey, for he assumed all

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responsibility for the mistake that had been made.

Another morning a sturdy runner was drawing me gaily down the avenue running along the south side of the Forbidden City when I saw in front of us a procession of young men in black robes, with some young girls in blue skirts holding up white banners in the clear sunshine, like a procession at some festival, except that their bearing was more animated. As I drew nearer, I read on the banners inscriptions execrating Japanese imperialism and foreign injustice. From time to time the whole band would shout some war-cry in unison, while the street-cars rang their bells, carriages diverted their course, and passers-by stopped for a moment without seeming particularly surprised at what was no doubt a familiar sight. Destiny, by which I was fated to be born at the opposite extremity of the continent, has given me features which no Asiatic could possibly mistake. My rickshaw-man was running so fast that we should soon have caught up with the demonstrators. Not for anything on earth would I have asked him to go more slowly or change his route, and soon we were passing down the marching ranks, close enough to touch them, for we had to leave room for carriages to pass. They all looked searchingly at me as I went by, but not one of all these excited young people had a threatening gesture or even a discourteous word for this unmistakable European. I reached the head of the procession as it was turning to the left in good order preparatory to crossing a marble bridge, beyond which it disappeared, swallowed up by the dark archway of the central gate, which stood there beneath the heavy crown of its two curved roofs like a motionless, majestic, and frowning guardian. Old China was welcoming her children.

Apart from the avenues, the streets form a rectangular network, and are just wide enough for two carriages. But in the

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commercial quarters the crowd which overflows on to the roadway makes such precautions necessary that it is quicker to travel by rickshaw or even on foot. All those who have driven an automobile in China know that the pedestrian does not attempt to get out of the way till the last moment. Not that he is less nervous than a European, but he has more dignity, and reckons upon greater reciprocal consideration. He always meets with this from his fellow-countrymen, who are as skilful as they are prudent, and accidents are very rare, even in this populous capital. But one of my friends was the cause of one this morning, while hurrying to his office at the Academy on a bicycle, and described it to me with more emotion than if he had been the victim.

"He was an old fellow," he said, "who did not hear me or else was thinking about something else. And there he was lying on the ground, beginning to groan: 'My leg, my poor leg! It was broken three months ago, and it has hardly healed before I shall have to have it set again.' I picked him up; he was shaking, but able to stand, and he tried to take a step. His leg was uninjured. I offered him a little money, which he refused, saying: 'You do not owe me anything, for no harm has been done.' And he went off, turning round once again to say: 'Don't worry.'"

In every country in the world retail trade tries to please customers by the variety of its window-dressing. And here, too, a window will show a pleasing arrangement of silk slippers soled with white felt, and shiny leather shoes, in the European or American fashion. Another has built up a structure of many-coloured lamp-shades. In other windows are robes in delicate shades or cameras displayed among a selection of portraits and landscapes, or felt hats side by side with Chinese skull-caps and fur caps. One can enter any shop with-

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out payment, walk round, examine one thing after another, and loiter about as if one were in a museum. The assistant waits in silence till he is asked a question, and salutes the visitor who goes away empty-handed as politely as when he enters. The shopkeeper is like a host receiving visitors in his own house. That is why, not content with giving it a good appearance, he decorates it outside with signboards and banners, which are, so to speak, its festal garment.

If, however, he is expecting none but guests of good position, he disdains this outward show, promising, on the contrary, a private reception undisturbed by intruders. In this street with no shop-windows, a few words on the door-post are information enough for experts. This is where the dealers in jade are grouped together. This silicate of lime and magnesia, not to be confounded with jadeite, a silicate of sodium and aluminium, is only to be found in scattered deposits in the mountains of Chinese Turkestan or in the form of pebbles brought down by the torrents which descend from there. In former times it was reserved as tribute for the Emperor, who granted it to his officers as a decoration, keeping for himself the white jade, which down to the present day has been considered very preferable to the black, veined, or green jade on account of its soft lustre. Only one quality is sold at an even higher price, and that is yellow jade, which owes its colour to the long time it has spent underground, thus showing indelible signs of its antiquity.

According to the ancient books of ritual, jade is an emblem of all the virtues, for it is as dim as humanity, as close-textured as knowledge, as precious as wisdom, and as clear-cut, without sharpness, as justice. It is here, in the tranquil light of a room protected from the indiscreet curiosity of those in the street by lowered blinds, that one should contemplate at

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leisure, set out on tiers of shelves, a pendant carved in open-work, a vase supported by a heraldic phoenix, or a goblet through which filters a soft radiance like that of moonlight. Nor is it only the eye that finds pleasure in it. Those looking at it are allowed to draw near, weigh it in the hand, and feel the delicacy of the lines, the firmness of the grain, and the softness of the "skin," for jade has a body.

Farther along come the lute-makers, in a still more retired quarter, with no sign but the name on their doors, and cramped little shops where great guitars hang from the ceiling, with their bodies touching one another. The workmen leave their tasks in the adjoining workshop and come in wearing aprons powdered with fine shavings to see this stranger who is talking about an old lute. To complete the fittings of the instrument presented to me at Nankin I have to apply to three guilds, one of which provides the string, another the silk cord with which to fasten it, and the third the little wooden case attached to this, which is turned in order to produce the tension, being held in position by the friction of its flat surface against the under side of the table. I should have had difficulty in managing all this if I had not had a helpful friend as my guide, who takes an interest in all the arts. Descended from one of the first families of the capital, his father having been a minister under the old régime, he owes to his origin and early education a fine taste still further polished by his studies, which he completed in France.

We return through the street of the booksellers, the most animated of all. Men and women students linger at the shop-windows in which rare editions lie open and others are advertised by bills stuck up on the glass, but they fall back to make way for an aged man of letters who has alighted from a rickshaw and whom they see welcomed inside with deep bows.

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A few days before, I had been to one of these shops alone, for the purpose of making some correction in an order. It was my second visit, but the bookseller did not recognize me, though this did not prevent him from promptly offering me a cup of tea in the back room reserved for valuable works. The walls were lined with them, lying on the shelves from floor to ceiling. Fearing lest the mistake might have been mine, I kept up the conversation by reading out the titles of these aloud, and receiving compliments upon my learning in return, and we might have gone on like this to the end of the day if I had not had another pressing engagement. I hazarded a reference to the collection which was to be sent me, upon which my host started and begged me to excuse his bad eyesight.

In an open workshop three or four workmen bending over stone slabs inclined at an angle like long desks are covering them with fine inscriptions with the point of the chisel. The oldest of them draws himself up and gives a special salutation to my companion, whose father's epitaph he engraved, and still recalls after the lapse of five years as having been one of his finest works.

In the aristocratic quarters the street runs between walls, above which rise the tops of trees. Here and there, beneath a canopy of glazed tiles, there is a square double door of a brilliant red, which is shut. One has to make out the numbers, which are often out of order; if one makes a mistake, neighbours do not as a rule know one another and cannot direct one. When the visitor is admitted, he finds before him a closed vestibule, from which he passes into the garden through the side openings and, having crossed it, comes to the building which stands facing the entrance, and out of which open the reception-rooms. Other buildings, scattered about in the shade and connected by covered galleries, serve as living-rooms or

## *The French Legation*

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for study. Thus behind the protection of its own walls every family disposes of the enclosed space as it prefers, and forms a city within a city.

From the row of empty carriages standing here we can see that a dinner is in progress. In accordance with the hospitable custom of China, the footmen and chauffeurs meet in the servants' quarters for a meal to which as many sit down as at the masters' table. As one returns home at night, the rustling of the leaves makes one more conscious of the silence. The houses are invisible and asleep, and nobody so much as dreams of my existence. I even forget it myself and am dissolved in this universe which knows nothing of me, like a single drop in the sea.



THE FRENCH LEGATION

Standing with its back to the southern wall, the quarter where the legations are to be found preserves a diplomatic silence. The stone palaces in the European style, though adorned with colonnades and open galleries, look as though they had been built for some colonial governor. The postern gates giving access to the parks in which they stand secluded are guarded by stone lions, and in addition by pickets of soldiers wearing the uniforms of their respective nations. These thick walls were useful when it was necessary to withstand a siege by the insurgent "Fists of justice," known outside China by their British nickname of "Boxers." Like the insurrection of "Supreme Peace" fifty years before, this patriotic society had

The French Legation

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as its original object the expulsion of the Manchus. The regent Tzu Hsi took alarm and considered it an astute move to divert this fury against the foreigner. By so doing she succeeded in prolonging the condemned dynasty's existence, but only for a few years and at the cost of an indemnity which is still a heavy burden upon the State finances, and, what is more serious, at the cost of bitter memories.

In these majestic avenues one might imagine oneself at Versailles, or even in India, when one meets a commanding-looking and smooth-faced lady sitting motionless in her carriage, without casting a glance at the natives. But outside the French Legation the sergeant in the colonial service gives me a nod of recognition instead of the military salute with which he greeted me on the first two days. Since knowing that I am one of the family they have treated me as a familiar friend and I am very glad of it.

How can I resist an invitation from my country's minister, when that minister is Monsieur Wilden? His wit is fascinating, his kindness attractive, and his experiences full of instruction. Being long accustomed to Chinese ways and speaking the language fluently, he knows the country's strength and weakness, its virtues and its glory, its mistakes and misfortunes. In this land the intellectual ferment from which all nations are suffering today has developed into a pernicious fever. He gives all due responsibility to circumstances, but also to people, about whom he expresses himself uncompromisingly. The Chinese appreciate generous and sincere friendship more than any other people in the world. They respect it and listen to it.

These qualities, which he possesses in the highest degree, are not infrequent in ambassadorial society. I find it in different forms in the foreign ministers whose acquaintance I owe

## *The French Legation*

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to him, as well as in those who surround him and work with him. One day I asked one of them whether it was absolutely impossible to get any clear meaning out of the treaties invoked with equal conviction by China and Japan in Manchuria; upon which he replied sceptically: "Of course it is impossible, and it is the same with all treaties. If a treaty admitted of only one interpretation, it would never be possible to get it accepted by both sides." I received a better lesson in diplomatic history that day in a few moments than I had ever had in my life.

After the missionaries, who know how to sound the depths of the Chinese conscience, the diplomatists who have spent some time in China are certainly the best judges of what goes on in that country. But the centralization of authority produced by the ease of communication keeps them at the end of a telegraph-wire, which imposes excessive restraints upon their freedom of action. There is nothing like direct contact. A man has to be on the spot to argue, negotiate, answer objections, find decisive arguments, and seize the favourable moment. Our statesmen know this perfectly well. That is why they now exchange visits and have never travelled so much as recently. At the same time the instructions by which the mother country fetters diplomatists render their knowledge and talent useless and make them mere postmen, whose duty it is to transmit their Government's dispatches to a Minister for Foreign Affairs.



CHINESE SERVANTS

When I left the Abode of Happiness, I had to reassure my faithful servant and promise to come back—which is, indeed, my intention. Every morning, with equal punctuality, one of his fellow-countrymen wishes me good-morning when he brings me my breakfast and prepares my bath in the next room. Valets and footmen, orderlies, cooks, chauffeurs—all are Chinese. From the very first day, they knew that I spoke their language, and so took an interest in me, which was redoubled on the following day, because one of them had seen me reading a Chinese literary work. Nothing touches a Chinese so much as to see a foreigner taking the trouble to study the history and civilization of his land. Whether educated or ignorant, they all have a respect for learning. Some of those here are not lacking in knowledge in their modest way. Thus one evening the young manservant waiting in the vestibule for my return was spending his leisure copying a moral maxim on a strip of stuff, and I complimented him on his fine calligraphy. He seemed a little embarrassed, however, so I did not press the point, realizing that it was probably a paid commission, and that he felt himself to be doing something he ought not to have done.

In the absence of Madame Wilden, who had just left by aeroplane to spend a few days in France, the minister's niece, Mademoiselle du Gardier, acts as hostess with a modest and charming grace. It is no sinecure to direct a domestic staff

Chinese Servants

which, though devoted, is very touchy. One day we had to go to the Hotel de Pékin for our midday meal, for the head cook had handed in his resignation on the plea of some slight. We were not the only ones to meet with such difficulties. A little later, when it was already piercingly cold after sundown, we were surprised to see a young Italian diplomatist putting on his summer overcoat on leaving. To his regret—for he, too, was a friend of China—he had to confess that his fur coat had disappeared. But everything was explained afterwards. It was not a theft, but an act of revenge on the part of the second footman. Jealous of the head footman, and coveting his place, he had tried to expose him to an unjust accusation which would oblige him to leave.

After my return to Europe I had a Chinese butler in my own service who was a model of punctiliousness, honesty, and devotion. He never failed to rise if one of us happened to pass the open door of the servants' quarters, but as he handed the dishes he was always ready to join in the conversation by making remarks, usually to me and in Chinese, though he spoke French extremely well: "Monsieur is right, that Emperor of Manchuria is nothing but a little idiot." Or else: "Will Monsieur not be behindhand with his book? He has not got beyond Nankin yet." He had been reading my manuscript on my writing-table, though this did not prevent him from leaving my study in exemplary order. He left me on some trifling pretext, I have never discovered why; but I could see quite well from his manner that he was annoyed. All my Chinese friends complain at times of the familiarity of their servants, but they accept it, because, as the very word (*domestique*) indicates in French, it is their way of attaching themselves to the family. Again, when some fault has to be found with them, they all expect an answer which allows

Good Society

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them to argue the point. Even in the imposing drawing-room of the Legation, if I ask for another lump of sugar in my coffee, the servant murmurs as he obeys me: "But I had already put one in." I reply: "I know you did," in the same tone of voice, and he recovers his serenity again. The Chinese is never servile. He is a man, who must be treated like a man, however much he may be separated from one by the social hierarchy. He is touchy because he is sensitive, and if he protests, it is because he thinks his merits have not been appreciated.



## *GOOD SOCIETY*

When I arrived in Pei-p'ing, I was deeply touched, and even a little overcome, at finding on the platform at the station, smiling his kind, subtle smile, Mr. Ch'ên Lu, for many years Minister of the Chinese Republic in Paris, where he left the pleasantest memories behind him. It was then that I had the honour of coming in contact with him, to my great joy, for this experienced diplomatist is also a poet of talent and loves all that is beautiful. The welcome he gave me at Pei-p'ing surpassed all my hopes. During my whole visit he never ceased to lavish tokens of affectionate kindness upon me, for his heart is as sensitive as his intelligence, and, divining sympathetically how much I suffered at being so far from my own people, though I hid it as best I could, he allowed me to find in his charming house more than a friend, for I felt that I had been adopted as one of the family.



## Good Society

Through him, too, I was introduced to the best society of Pei-p'ing, where I missed nobody but the new Minister of the Republic in Paris, Mr. Wellington Koo, then in Manchuria, which he had been anxious to enter with the commission of inquiry of which he was a member, in spite of the significant warnings of the Japanese authorities, who declined all responsibility should any misfortune happen to him. But I was able to tell Mrs. Koo, whom I already had the honour to know, and who combines the most refined elegance with a very high degree of intelligence, how much I admired not only his talents as a statesman, but also his energy and courage.

Nothing could have been more sumptuous or cordial than the gatherings to which I was invited in this way. The food was exquisite. Each one in turn did me the honours of his native province in this respect, setting before me its favourite dainties, explaining how they were made, and happy if they were to my taste. If in these circumstances I more than once committed the sin of gluttony, the joy of my hosts will, I hope, at least, be accepted as an extenuating circumstance. One of my happiest moments was that in which I overheard a remark made by a guest to his neighbour in a low voice, referring to me by my Chinese name: "*Lai hsien-shêng ch'ih hên to*: Mr. Lai has a good appetite."

Conversation did not flag. Little was said about politics, but, as in France, the conversation turned for preference upon present or absent friends, and often upon literature or art, in a tone of amiable sprightliness, no opinion being advanced without a deprecating smile, and no jest being hazarded except to elicit a rejoinder. It was a contest of courtesy and a social diversion of which we French know the rules too, but more animated in the briskness with which each speaker would, as

## *The Distemper of Youth*

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it were, return the ball as it was tossed to him, in a good-humoured cross-fire.

Thus in all its healthy manifestations Chinese life appears more intense than that of Europe, but also more harmonious. The reason is that, for the maintenance of its order, it has permanently incorporated in its structure those enduring distinctions which Confucius and his disciples developed into a coherent system of moral obligations under the name of "rites." Hence the great discrepancies between the stories of most travellers, according as they have had none save purely formal relations with the Chinese, or seen none but the lower orders of the people, which resemble the corresponding class in all countries and are even more violent when their instincts are not kept under control.

The rites are like a shell, and act, so to speak, as moulds which have to be allowed for before the inner substance can be reconstituted, but viewed in reversed relief, which turns negative into positive. If the outer skin happens to break at any point, the flesh immediately becomes inflamed and breaks into an eruption: the social order is suffering from cancer.



THE DISTEMPER OF YOUTH

The malady from which China is suffering is patent to all eyes, especially those of foreigners, in the form of civil war and political disorder. Similar disturbances have broken out every time the supreme power has fallen into a state of weakness or shown signs of disintegration, thus allowing free play

The Distemper of Youth

to rival ambitions. As soon as the central Government has been reconstituted, they have always ceased, leaving no trace behind, for the moral equilibrium of the nation had not been affected. Signs of recovery are appearing today. But another source of inflammation remains, more serious and deep-rooted, and that is the faulty education of the young.

For about the last twenty years the young in every country of the globe have been restless, presumptuous, brutal, and dispirited, because they have been drifting haphazard, lacking either rules of conduct or a well-ordered state of mind. In Europe the War is held responsible. But it merely precipitated a crisis which was bound sooner or later to be provoked by the materialism of the previous century.

Materialism is incapable of founding a system of morality, or providing any object in life beyond the gratification of appetites. Up to the time of the War it was held in check by long-established habits, but these have been lost by recent generations. Today it is clearly apparent that its logical outcome is the antagonism between capitalism, standing for the principle that might is right, and Communism, which represents the claim of the "have-nots." The two systems are ranged in opposition to each other, but have this in common: that neither aims at anything but a more or less unequal distribution of wealth. The problem is certainly not lacking in interest. Excessive opulence is not propitious to spiritual life, nor is extreme poverty. But it is not enough to possess. Men must know how to use what they possess.

Religion alone can give existence any object beyond profit or pay. And that is why the Russian Communists, whose logic is excellent, if their principles are false, would like to exterminate it. That, too, is why we are now seeing the formation of a picked band of young people who find in Catholic

The Distemper of Youth

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dogma a sure method alike for action, knowledge, and contemplation. In the same way, during the barbarism of the early Middle Ages a few monks in their monasteries sufficed to save the tradition of the Church, and with it a civilization that was menaced.

The irruption of materialism into China took place suddenly and, being complicated by a decay of governmental authority, produced disastrous effects. In Shanghai, Nankin, and Pei-p'ing I could not avoid making an official round of visits to a certain number of universities. I refused to see the rest. What could they have shown me beyond lecture-rooms and laboratories? Almost everywhere the system is anarchical and the results worthless. During the month following the occupation of Mukden by the Japanese the students went on strike and spent their time either holding political meetings—after which they proceeded to thrash the Minister for Foreign Affairs in his office at Nankin—or else boarding trains as they left the stations of Pei-p'ing and Shanghai, for the purpose of joining their fellow-students in the new capital.

It is true that if our young royalists in Paris had been allowed a free hand, they would have been capable of similar or even worse acts of violence towards Briand or Monsieur Caillaux. But in China the movement was far more extensive and the Government did not dare to take firm action.

Apart from these exceptional circumstances, it sometimes happens that the students get up partial strikes, demanding the removal of a professor, or even the president of a university; and they almost always get their way. Professors, having no regular status, are further exposed to every political vicissitude: a chair is a "job," often distributed among other spoils of office to the supporters of the party in power, without inquiry into the recipient's qualifications. But it is the most

## *The Distemper of Youth*

wretched of professions. Owing to the existing financial disorder, salaries have not been paid for nearly a year past, except in universities supplied with special funds from France or America.

There are far too many universities in China, and far too many students are sent to complete their education in those of foreign lands. Their sole ambition is to obtain a diploma which will bring them employment as an engineer or an official. But their calculations are disappointed, for industry is overwhelmed with applicants for posts, while administrative positions are hardly to be had except by favour, until the examining and supervisory bodies provided for by Sun Yat-sen in his system of the "five powers" come into force. As for a diploma, it means nothing, for most of the Chinese universities have adopted the American method, which makes it the reward of regular attendance at lectures, without any examination into the student's acquirements, and accepts marks of attendance as a substitute for examination marks. Foreign universities are quite ready to grant diplomas to students who are not staying in the country, for they do not want to discourage them.

The students learn nothing, and can learn nothing, for they have lost all respect for their professors and do not know how to work. What they lack is moral stamina and culture. In former days both were provided by schools of the old type in a form easily assimilated by the national temperament, through the classical works of Confucius. The Republican Government has committed the irretrievable error of excluding these from the curriculum. All that is put into the hands of students now, and that only in the higher classes of the colleges, are literary anthologies, very well selected, it is true, but inefficacious, for the literature and civilization of China are based upon the classical texts, and without a knowledge

## *The Distemper of Youth*

of the classics their true significance is lost. A sort of modern course of instruction has been created, as futile as that of the French, and is now being abolished.

As for primary education, I shall never forget how the eyes of a Minister of Public Instruction were unable to meet mine when I asked him to explain the system, and he had to reply that it was dependent upon the will of the provincial governments, which most certainly possess neither the competence nor the character which are necessary if China is to be provided with the 1,400,000 teachers required according to official estimates. And even if, by combining their efforts, they were capable of getting together such staffs, how could they arrive at the uniform curriculum which is equally indispensable? The situation is the same as in Indo-China. In both countries the village schools have been abolished, in which the villagers clubbed together and paid some retired official or scholar without a post to teach their children, while the authorities have failed to organize normal schools for training teachers, the need for which is so urgent.

Apart from the Jesuit University at Shanghai and the School of Commerce and Industry which the Jesuits have recently founded at Tientsin, the only higher educational establishment still producing satisfactory results in these troublous times is the Catholic University at Pei-p'ing, founded in 1925 by the Benedictines of the American Congregation of Monte Cassino in what was once the palace belonging to a prince of the fallen dynasty. The other universities give some place to the literature and history of China, but merely as a recondite subject for specialists; their principal faculties, having by far the largest number of students, are those of law and applied science. The Catholic University alone is carrying out a comprehensive program embracing

## *The Distemper of Youth*

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every department of Chinese civilization, from antiquity down to the present day, including its systems of philosophy, religions, and arts. It alone, too, thanks to a special foundation, has been willing and able to add a preparatory college, to make up for the deficiencies of the official education and provide students capable of attending the lectures intelligently and taking an interest in them. From 1933 onwards this indispensable provision will be supplemented by an entrance examination, which will provide evidence of the large numbers of candidates and ensure that they are properly sifted.

Primary and secondary education are not under the sole direction of the State, any more than higher education is; for nowadays, knowing how enormous the task is, it gladly accepts the co-operation of educational establishments under other than State management. Among the latter, the Protestants have hitherto had the advantage both in numbers and in money. At present there are barely more than three thousand Catholic schools in existence, attended by one hundred and thirty thousand pupils, seventy-five thousand of whom have been baptized. The director of one of these schools, in the province of Pei-p'ing, but rather to the south of it, was recently congratulated by the general in command of the military area upon the type of character which was being produced there. The converts made by the Protestant missions are far from offering the same security. A notorious example is that of General Fêng Yu-hsiang, who was made much of by America because he was a member of the Young Men's Christian Association and had his soldiers baptized in a body, but who afterwards went over to Communism.

People in France are astonished to find so many schoolmasters in that party. But after the materialistic education which they have received, the surprising thing is that they

The Distemper of Youth

have not all joined it. In the Chinese universities Communist propaganda is making steady progress among the best students, who are not content with an exaggerated nationalism and are still capable of reflection. If care is not taken, they will all adopt it. But the Chinese Republic possesses no moral system or conception of the universe to oppose to this doctrine, any more than the French Republic does. The Church has nothing to fear from Communism. It may even approve of some of its reforms, if they really remedy abuses and improve the condition of the humble, but on the express understanding that they are to apply to temporal affairs only. Its truth must not be tampered with in the spiritual sphere. The Communists know this perfectly well. The first thing they take care to do on invading a territory is to destroy the missions and exterminate the faithful. They are the Church's worst enemies. But in the China of our day it has no others.

Such was the subject of our conversation that day, and my friends were filled with dismay as they thought of their country's future. Though still young, they had none the less begun their studies in schools of the old-fashioned type, in which, if a master happened to die, the students went into mourning, as though for an adopted father. "Even we do not know much," remarked one of them; "but those who come after us will know nothing at all." So far as he himself is concerned, he was too modest, for I have had opportunities of appreciating his trained and unerring taste. But as regards those who are now aged twenty, I am very much afraid that what he says is true.

This pavilion belonging to what was once the palace, built in days of old for an Imperial favourite, still has its graceful roof, its colonnades and mullioned windows, but has been converted into a restaurant where savoury fritters are served

At Mei Lan-fang's

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us with our tea, some stuffed with meat and others with preserved fruits, on a terrace, supported upon piles, which looks down upon the southern lake. The sun is sinking in a clear sky, casting a long trail of light across the mirror-like water. Not a leaf stirs on the trees as they stand sunk in meditation on the shores, and if a breeze goes by, they pay no attention. All else will fade away, but this will remain. It is impossible to despair of a land possessing the secret of this power and tranquillity.



### *AT MEI LAN-FANG'S*

His smile flashed out like a flower suddenly bursting into bloom, marvellous in its brilliance, grace and sweetness. Well-proportioned in his close-fitting coat, brisk without being abrupt, he advances with a light, firm step. The luminous candour of his eyes would in itself suffice to reveal a privileged nature, in which strength of mind and body combine harmoniously to produce the richest concord, even if I did not know that I am in the presence of one of the greatest artists in the whole world. Mei Lan-fang is renowned throughout China. America has recently applauded him. In the last few years his name has even reached Europe, which is eager to honour him in its turn.

It is to Mr. Ch'ên Lu, who knows what interests me, that I owe this opportunity of calling upon him on the very day of my arrival, to talk over a project which we both have equally at heart, and to look at his splendid collections of costumes

### At Mei Lan-fang's

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in the intimacy of his home, not to speak of his library, in which are to be found the rarest works on poetry, the drama, and music. A pleasant surprise had been prepared for me: a little book on Chinese music which I had published a long time ago lay open on a table, awaiting an inscription, which I traced with a very clumsy but thoroughly sincere brush.

Today he is giving this luncheon for me, followed by a concert, in his sumptuous residence in the Street of the Very Great Wise Man (*Wu liang ta jen*). He conducts me, like a courteous host, through the covered way running between mossy rocks on the left of the entrance-hall to the first building, from which we advance in procession, with the mayor of Pei-p'ing at our head, followed by a throng of poets, statesmen, scholars, generals, and diplomatists, to the central building, where a profusion of dainties is set out on crowded tables round the tea-cups: preserved fruits served on skewers, fritters with a subtle aroma, and the delicate milky drinks prepared from walnuts or almonds.

The concert is to take place in the lofty drawing-room, between two smaller rooms in which I was received on my first visit. In one of them is arranged a children's orchestra, conducted by their teacher, a subtle and learned musician, who has revived the melodies used at court ceremonies under the last dynasty. Flutes both straight and horizontal and pan-pipes, supported by the guitar and the set of gongs tuned to various notes, perform their vigorous melodies, following their broken lines without variations of tone, but with a majesty which dominates and soars above all individual emotion. Next, at my request, the master takes up the lute, propping it up level on the table with the necessary care, and I draw near so as to lose none of the vaporous haze of tone between the notes, grave or crystalline by turn, detached by his finger, before

At Mei Lan-fang's

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it dies away like an echo among the leaves.

A young man advances, pale and timid, clasping beneath his elbow an instrument which I recognize from having heard it before in the theatres of Cholon and Shanghai. It is the *erb-bu*, whose name indicates at once that it is two-stringed and that it comes from beyond the northern frontiers. At about the same period—that of our Middle Ages—central Asia was sending Europe a similar instrument by way of the Arabs, with which a bow made of horsehair was sometimes used. It was the ancestor of our violin. In China it has retained its primitive shape, the bow being always slipped between the two strings which rest upon a little cylinder, like a minute snakeskin drum, attached to the long neck without either notches or nuts. The *erb-bu* has not been allowed the honour of a concert before. Mr. Liu T'ien-hua has undertaken to renew its glories. Seated on a low seat with the neck of the instrument projecting above his left shoulder, he tunes it to a fifth, which in the music of the theatre usually heralds a song, and announces the title: "The Sick Man's Lament." He is a virtuoso of extraordinary ability, drawing from its two strings with absolute precision phrases and arpeggi as brilliant as those of the violin, but the tone penetrates the heart with a sharper stab, and soon our curiosity is accompanied by a profound emotion, so sweet is the lament of the melody as it rises, seeming to bid farewell to the life which it has to relinquish, mournful and resigned, but still summoning up strength for a last smile. When he reached the end, we were all silent and absorbed, and it was some moments before we could collect ourselves and press round to congratulate him.

This music was sadly prophetic, for shortly afterwards I was to hear of the premature end of the composer who knew so well how to render it. He was carried off by the epidemic

## *A Family Party*

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of scarlet fever which raged in Pei-p'ing after my departure.



A FAMILY PARTY

Carriages throng the narrow street, blocked by crowds and thick with shop-signs on long floating banners, and jostle one another in front of a brightly illuminated doorway. Curious spectators stand round, watching the fashionable ladies in their rich cloaks, barely touching the black mud with their embroidered mules as they lean on the arm of their husbands or brothers muffled in furs. This house is the cloth-merchants' club. A rich banker is celebrating his father's eightieth birthday by a theatrical performance. He has secured the services of the best artists in China, and even of Mei Lan-fang, who is to wind up the evening's entertainment and has had an invitation sent to me.

Mr. Ch'ên Lu accompanies me, though he has a horror of crowds. He is making an even greater sacrifice for me this evening than I was aware. As we alight, I request him to precede me, for I know nobody in this gathering; upon which he replies, shaking his finely-cut head and blinking his eyes behind their gold spectacles: "Nor do I."

Stumbling a little, for we are both short-sighted, we walk together round the screen which stands barring the way to evil spirits in front of all Chinese houses. On the far side of the courtyard, beneath the projecting canopy which leads into the room, we perceive a man with a proud bearing and a firm chin, and introduce ourselves to him. He is, as it hap-

A Family Party

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pens, the financier who is giving the entertainment, or a near relation of his, for he shows us to a table where servants at once hasten to pour us out some tea, until we can be found a place. The performance has already begun, and in the back rows we can see the late-comers standing in a compact mass.

We have to make our way through this crowd, conducted by a young man with a red paper flower in his buttonhole. This is the sign by which members of the family may be distinguished, red being the colour of joy. The room is hung with red silk on which are inscribed in gold lettering congratulatory addresses and wishes for long life. The program which we are given also has the names of the actors and the titles of the plays inscribed in gold on a red background. In the gallery on the first tier, where people crowd together to make room for us on a seat, I have a band of young girls in front of me whose eyes sometimes wander from the stage to consult their mirrors and see whether their glossy hair is properly arranged on the brow, while they exchange little teasing nudges and sometimes even change places out of some friendly whim. They, too, wear the red flower, pinned close to the collar of their high-necked dresses. In the boxes on either side are to be seen families with children pointing at the actors and asking to have the play explained to them. Tea and cakes are carried round. There is not a movement in the seats down below; that is where the connoisseurs congregate. From time to time, only, an arm is raised. A servant stationed beside the wall tosses over a white packet which is caught in the air; it is a towel dampened with warm water for wiping the hands and face, and is shortly afterwards returned in the same way.

Three actors are on the stage: a mother with her daughter and son-in-law. They are three male actors, for during the

## A Family Party

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last two centuries the Chinese theatre has not allowed any mixture of the sexes. Only in the present day are a few professional actresses beginning to appear and obtaining a success, but tradition is putting up a fight and will last a long time yet.

The mother is one of those worthy middle-class women, plump and jovial, whom one sees in such numbers in the streets of the commercial quarters, bargaining over the wares displayed in the grocers' or haberdashers' shops. The daughter is full of dainty affectation. The son-in-law wears an official's cap of the period of the Ming dynasty and a black beard hanging in scanty filaments. He is a young scholar. Husband and wife are unhappily married. The old lady is endeavouring to reconcile them for the night. They yield to her, but we are not shown any comic bedroom scenes. The Chinese theatre is very decent and forbids an actor to appear before the public in bed. He remains seated, with his chin resting upon his closed fist if he is a man, or on the open hand if he represents a woman. Everybody understands this language of signs. And so the couple settle down, one on each side of the table. As soon as one of them seems to be asleep, the other watches him disagreeably and complains half audibly of his fate. The peace which prevails is deceptive and full of menace. The husband gets up first and goes about his affairs. The crossing and uncrossing of his hands signifies that he is opening the door, and his heavy tread that he is going downstairs. But a letter has fallen out of his pocket-book, and is seized by his wife. At first she hesitates to look at it, but curiosity wins the day. Her face lights up with a malicious joy: it is a compromising letter. A noise is heard outside; she returns to what represents her bed and pretends to be asleep. Her husband comes hurriedly upstairs. He looks about on the floor, under the table, in the top of his boot, and under his wife's dress, anx-

A Family Party

ious, uneasy, and soon trembling with terror. This is a silent scene, accompanied by the orchestra, which is grouped to one side, with hurried clashes on the cymbals. Silence has fallen upon the whole room, for it is a moment of tense feeling and his gestures are eloquent. Approving cries are heard from various parts of the room, of "*Hao!*"—"Good!" This is the Chinese way of shouting "*Bravo!*" which is certainly as good as our own. Applause breaks forth like rain after thunder, but the shower does not last long, for fear of checking the progress of the drama.

These demonstrations never take place at the end of the piece, which is marked only by the exit of the characters and the entrance of the attendants, who come in and move the table and chairs. Not that these works are lacking in merit, but rather that their value is no longer a matter of dispute. The Chinese theatre is a repertory theatre. Even modern authors most often confine themselves to adapting ancient dramas or borrow their plot almost unchanged from history or a romance.

Next a heroic drama offers some superb jousts for our admiration, in which the warriors challenge, pursue, and confront one another with rhythmical movements, though unaccompanied by any particular melody, being supported only by the alternate clash of the deep-toned cymbals or the strident note of the rattle, held, as it were, in suspense and thrown back from one to the other as the sport of cruel destiny. We are next allowed the relaxation of a comic scene, in which we see a poor student relegated to the attic by a self-important innkeeper, who changes his tone on hearing that his client has come out first in his examination and is shortly to become a powerful magistrate. The actor is full of verve and is not afraid to modernize his speeches: "What! Do you imagine,

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pray, that by paying a penny you are in the hotel of the Sleeping-cars?"

It is two o'clock in the morning when a row of electric lamps with copper reflectors is lit in front of the stage, while the orchestra disappears into the wings. A murmur of delight runs through the audience. Mei Lan-fang is about to appear. The famous artist is not only an interpreter, but, like Molière, a theatrical manager as well. He brings his assistants with him, together with the innovations which he has introduced into the stage-setting, without in any way changing the traditions of this type of drama.

Can that be he, that young girl singing so sadly beneath her flowered head-dress and glittering cloak? Being forewarned, I do find, on analysing the features, the outline of the chin, the flash of the eyes, the engaging smile. But where did he get this crystalline voice which flits from note to note, settles on one, quivers, soars, then flutters languidly down, full of trills and the beat of wings? And this speaking voice in which lingers a melody as vague as a memory, yet so clear that even a foreigner like me does not lose a syllable? But, above all, the swaying movement of the supple body, and even the hanging head which hardly moves at all, yet enough to reveal an inward palpitation, like the slow oscillation of a tree stirred by an imperceptible breeze.

She is a woman of the palace, one of that useless throng that fills some abode of happiness. A tyrant has seized the throne. She has assumed the costume and adornments of an Imperial princess who has had to be promised to him in marriage. By this ruse she will manage to approach him and mete out justice to him. Though afraid, she will not hesitate. He appears, his cuirass distended by his sturdy form, with a ferocious beard and eyes aflame with drunkenness and de-



## A Family Party

sire. A famous comedian is acting this part, and a justly famous one, for Mr. Wang Po-shên's gestures and accents are magnificent in their vigour. She approaches coquettishly, offers him more drink, and soon, in confusion, asks him to dismiss the waiting-women. This cuirass of his, she says, should be taken off on a day of good fortune; she would like to take it off herself. He yields to what he takes for her tender solicitude, and sinks down behind the curtains of the bed-chamber, where he summons her to him. "I am taking the pins out of my hair," she replies, "removing my tunic—my shoes—my skirt." But from under her garments she draws a dagger and gazes upon it, trembling in every limb. He makes no reply; he is asleep. The moment has come.

This sequence of emotions, in turn real or feigned, is interpreted by movements in which every detail has its meaning and falls into its right place like a word in a phrase. Nothing is left to the chance of improvisation; a rigorous process of composition has gone to make up a consummate picture every line of which bites into the mind and imprints itself upon it like an engraving. It is not merely one out of many women whom we have before our eyes. It is woman's beauty, her gentleness, weakness, courage, and wiles, her lies and her heroism. Tones of voice and gestures are, so to speak, laid on without either niggling or blurring the outlines, with supreme decision and unerring sureness of touch, as though in a drawing by a master hand, or one of those Chinese inscriptions in which the calligrapher's brush has left in the thick and thin strokes, in the ups and downs, in angle and in curve, the indelible trace of the emotion that gave it life. It is a calligraphic grace worthy of the hand of a great artist.



## THE THEATRE

The drama in China always mingles song and music with the spoken word and is, strictly speaking, not a branch either of literature or of music. It lacks composition and style enough to merit the former name. The author follows the history, legend, or tale point by point, without throwing the main action into relief or eliminating what is accidental, just as French dramatists did previous to the sixteenth century, before they began to follow the example of Greek tragedy and conform to the rules of Aristotle. Monologues and dialogues are in homely language, and though the words of the songs contain some poetical imagery, they follow no rhythm save that of the music. This latter is not composed specially for the drama; it can offer only a selection of themes fixed by tradition, which are selected according to the nature of the subject and varied according to the taste of the interpreter. In former days the actor would have followed his profession from infancy, often inheriting it from his father and receiving his training in his own company of actors or in his family. Today, thanks to Mr. Li Yü-ying, Pei-p'ing possesses a school of dramatic art, where I saw a most interesting performance by the students.

It should not be supposed, however, that the text of these works is devoid of interest. If the author borrows his subject from history, as he most frequently does, he always finds most noble examples of devotion and courage in highly mov-

## The Theatre

ing situations. Whether he be an actor or an amateur of the drama, he understands scenic effects, and if he has any talent, he combines truth to nature with power of delineation. But these subjects are only themes, offering opportunities for the virtuosity of the actor who develops them, supplementing the words by gestures, which have their own laws and constitute an art in themselves. Hence when the piece is published, the speeches are not allotted to the character by name, but to the stage type: the ingénue accepts an assignation with the leading juvenile, or the heavy father is made a fool of by the comic manservant. And nowadays a number of scenes drawn from different pieces are often performed in the same evening, thus forming what the French call a *spectacle coupé*, or mixed bill.

Gesture without words develops into the dance. The modern drama has now none but warlike ballets, which are, however, magnificent with the swirl of robes, the flash of sabres and, now and then, of a lance wielded by an amazing solo dancer, who whirls it round his body in a dazzling circle, so fast that it ceases to be visible. However, Mei Lan-fang has studied ancient dances and is reviving their graceful steps. Thus he may be seen in the story of the *Western Beauty*, in the scene of the wedding-feast, saluted by a band of children who come on carrying lanterns and flowers, with the most charming effect.

The piece which has as its subject *The Monkey Stealing the Peaches of Immortality* is at once a religious mystery-play, a ballet, and a fairy-story. It dates from the fifteenth century, and its title indicates a blend of the Buddhist belief in the transmigration of souls and of Taoist mythology, in which the fruit plucked from a magic tree is able to avert death. By the use of very simple means the scene suggests the splendours

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of celestial life, in which the divinities, with their train of angelic figures and savage monsters, take alarm at the arrival of the intruder. Some try to seduce him, others drive him away, but he escapes by the power of the talisman, even though he obtained possession of it by foul means, and ends by obtaining a place in this paradise and forgiveness for all his sins. The artist who played this part created a thing admirable in its intelligence and skill: he was neither man nor monkey, but both at the same time, a man when he wondered at the celestial marvels or prostrated himself in prayer, a monkey when he snatched the fruit with an abrupt gesture, examined it curiously before biting it, only to be reminded of his bestial nature at times, in spite of himself, by a sudden itching, when he would bound sideways and descend on all fours before drawing himself up again, all these relapses being merely indicated, as it were, by fleeting allusions and becoming more and more infrequent. One saw his nature gradually shaking itself free from them until it achieved full redemption. The allegorical significance of this story is that salvation lies within ourselves. He who knows how to discover this will triumph over temptation and know no fear, and so will become sanctified. But it must be admitted that the public hardly seemed to think of this aspect of the matter, but was diverted by the dances, combats, gambols, and actions of this demon, who breathed forth jets of sparks in front of the stage. Encouraged by the applause, he repeated this trick until it failed to come off because his stock of glowing tinder was exhausted, whereupon he made his excuses with a gesture that delighted the connoisseurs.

The theatre in China has a very strong attraction. I never once went to it without finding the house full to overflowing, every box being occupied, and having its teapot, cigarette-box,

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and bowl of fruit standing on the ledge; while down below, in the wooden stalls, a serried crowd of attentive faces, old, wrinkled enthusiasts, spectacled grandmothers, young men wearing a wrist-watch under the sleeve of their silk robe, young women with hair cut in a short fringe in the fashion of the day, all followed the play in a silence charged with emotion, only broken at moments of strong feeling by a vigorous "Hao!" from some enthusiast, which called forth a round of applause.

Thus I saw Mr. Ch'en Yen-ch'iu, a young artist with a touching sensibility, in a drama dealing with a vanished state of manners, for it had as its subject the exactions of recruiting-sergeants and was entitled *Tears in the Mountain Wastes*. The Kuang Hua theatre was crowded to see a troupe of children perform the heroic opera *The Encounter between the Doughty Warriors* without the omission of a single step or vocal flourish. And as soon as the name of Mei Lan-fang appeared on the posters, the whole theatre was sold out on the first day. He did not fail to have a place reserved for me, and thus I was able to admire him once more in the story of Mu Lan, the warrior maid who dons uniform in order to gain exemption for her sick father, covers herself with glory, and returns, modest and submissive, to resume her place in the home—a "quick-change" role in which, by superimposing an affectation of virility upon feminine grace, the artist produced a masterpiece of truth and fine taste.

In *The Bend in the River* a poor woman sees her husband again after a long absence and finds him a great war-lord. This time it was again Mr. Wang Po-shên who supported Mei Lan-fang, his speeches being admirable in their pride and warm-heartedness. First he puts her to the test, and then, having found her above reproach, reveals his identity. With an

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impulse of tender piety she prostrates herself before him, then questions him about his new station in life, admires his horsewhip, the emblem of his rank, and prepares him a fish soup which he finds abominable. Suddenly he notices a man's shoe in a corner. It has been left there by his son, who was born after his departure and has grown up with his deserted mother. The father draws his great sabre, but she bursts into such a rippling laugh that he is quite taken aback. "Yes," she says archly, "there has been somebody here since you left me. He is nicer than you are, and younger too." The piece ends with a terrible surprise. On his way there the soldier had met a little boy and by a curious accident had killed him. The mother questions him breathlessly: "How was he dressed?" she pants. "Had he a bow and arrows?" No further doubt is possible; it was their child. And thus the vengeance of a dead man is accomplished, who had appeared at the beginning of the piece and explained his grievance against the family.

Or again, to avenge her father the fisherman's daughter enters the boat and pushes off from the shore. Though nothing was there before my eyes but the actor and his gestures, I could positively see the boat and the shore, and I shall never forget a movement indicating at once the oscillation of the boat in the water as it gave beneath her weight and the way in which she straightened herself in the attempt to keep her balance. Our European theatre has its mechanical stage effects, but it need not be proud on that account.



AN EVENING AMONG ARTISTS

In the courtyard, dimly illuminated by the lamps in the galleries, puffs of fragrant smoke rise from the juniper-wood and lose themselves among the foliage of the trees, while the wood glows red beneath the gridiron. A Mongol dinner is in store for us. Lovers of local colour will regret the camels and the desert. But local colour is merely a convention. It is only colour that matters, and that is certainly not wanting in our group, in which I am the most Mongol figure of all, with my fur cap bought in the covered market at Pei-p'ing. By my side are Mr. Ch'ên Lu in his overcoat and Mei Lan-fang standing bare-headed, the rest of the guests in Chinese robes, and our host's two daughters waiting on us with their delicate hands: it is a picturesque scene.

Cooking in China is an art; not content with the marvels which it has invented to meet the taste of every province, it is equally interested in exotic flavours; its object, however, is to draw inspiration from these, while freeing them from anything repellent or savage which there may be about them, and subordinating them to the canons of good style. Only in China has mutton, the food of the Mongols, found this aromatic pickle in which it is steeped before being placed upon the gridiron. Everybody lifts himself out a piece with his chopsticks and watches it grilling and crackling, turning it when necessary. The flavour is delicious, and we are simply astonished to find ourselves capable of gorging ourselves with

An Evening among Artists

meat to this extent, like true Mongols.

The subtle scholar who is our host this evening has another treat in store for us. We take our places in the courtyard before a window which is now lit up. Coloured shadows are thrown upon it, and we recognize an emperor, magistrates, and soldiers. These are the characters in the plays which are going to be performed before us. I am asked to choose the one which I prefer from a long list of titles inscribed on both sides of a curved slip of wood. They are the same as those performed at the theatre, and since I am familiar with the subject I choose the story of a novice in a Buddhist monastery, pursued by the wife he has deserted, who is a witch. Here is the superior of the monastery, with his shaky head, and the novice kneeling before him. Next comes a flood, sent by the witch and threatening the walls of the monastery on the mountain, then the combats with monsters, one of which spits fire behind the oiled paper screen. The violin gives forth its singing note, and the guitar its sharp, mocking tones, in a scherzo rhythm. The monk has returned home again to find his wife, who shows him their child. His only thought is of how he can rid himself of her, but she suspects nothing and presses the infant to her heart.

The music changes. These deep, penetrating notes are those of the Chinese cembalo, which is struck with flexible sticks. It sketches a constant succession of arpeggi, with which is associated now a three-stringed violoncello, softer than the violin, and now a tenor voice, pleasing and subtly modulated. It is a cradle song, full of anxious tenderness, melancholy and delicious. We have to congratulate the artists. The one who moves the silhouettes cut out of parchment does it with only one hand; with the other he holds the stem of his pipe as he smokes with a complacent and rather sly expression. The

The Wedding

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singer towards the end of the room has his book open before him and lets nothing distract him from it. The two musicians are old, for they wear chin-beards, and their clear-cut faces are seamed with wrinkles. All four of them receive my compliments with an amiable bow, but their faces light up with a happy smile when I add: "I shall remember this when I am in France."



## THE WEDDING

The musicians have arrived. They have donned their tunics, gay with red and blue, as though for a real marriage, and now set up their drums in two opposite rows along the walls of the oblong room, while the flute-, clarinet-, and hautboy-players withdraw to the far end, where they stand waiting for the signal.

It is my friend the minister's son who has arranged this surprise for me. Whether antique vases, sculpture, or music are concerned, his subtle taste is able to distinguish what is direct and strong beneath any roughness of technique. The symphonies we are about to hear are those which traditionally accompany the betrothed girl as, bidding farewell to her companions, she enters the hermetically closed sedan chair, afterwards alighting from it to be welcomed by her new family and presented to their ancestors.

From the very first notes we are swallowed up as in a flood of sound, so mighty that in spite of myself I advance, drawn step by step by the waves of music along the path traced by

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the rhythmic beat of the drums, till I reach a vacant seat near the group of instrumentalists, where I may drink in the imperious and heart-rending melody at still closer quarters. The hautboy marks the measure, following a straight line as firm as the solid ground, while on either side of it the clarinet plunges into swirling watery eddies, with the flute hovering lightly above. Then all of them join for a moment in unison, only to separate again with their varying qualities of tone; the unstable compound of tone explodes, combines again, and explodes once more, with prismatic changes and moving lines of colour which leave the ear not a moment of repose and security, while all the drums are struck simultaneously with the violence of a thunderbolt, then suddenly hushed to a murmur as soft as a shower of rain, or the drumsticks descend in a sharp hail of sound on the wooden frame. There is no conductor, but they all sit with strained attention and a fixed gaze, following in memory the score handed down from past centuries.

There is nothing glad or tender in this nuptial song. It is a pious martyrdom, a necessary and fruitful suffering. The betrothed girl is the chosen one, but also the victim, offered up as a sacrifice to the will of elemental nature. It is the idea illustrated by Stravinsky in his symphonic poem *Noces* (*Nuptials*), and still better in his *Sacre du printemps* (*Rites of Spring*), in a music in which his art succeeds, without ever having heard them, in imitating these sudden blazes of tone and this implacable rhythm. But here the harmony is in its native state, without any polished facets, a hard, rugged gem, which has slowly assumed its unchanging form in the depths of Chinese soil.



CONFUCIUS

The temple is at the far end of the city, to the north-east, and to reach it we have taken the street-car running down the long avenue of Ha-ta men. This is the Mongol and Manchu quarter, already to be distinguished at the last few stopping-places by its signboards written in that cluster-like script in which the strokes cling to the upright stem on either side. We have only a few steps to walk along a sidewalk of earth, on which a crowd dressed in the Chinese fashion, but noisier and rougher, throngs busily round the grocers' shops and the ones where squirrel-, mole-, and marmot-skins are bought and sold.

"Before the Revolution," says Mr. Tung, "we used all to be summoned to celebrate this anniversary in full dress." His voice is sad. I feel a sense of disappointment. Anti-clerical emperors expelled the Buddhist congregations and held the Christian missionaries guilty of offences against the Emperor's person. The Government of the Republic has decided to abolish all the ancient festivals of China, including those of Confucius. I knew this, yet I had hoped to meet at least a few of the faithful at the ancestral temple on this solemn day, which, tradition says, is that upon which, five and a half centuries before the Christian era, the master was born to whom China has owed its rules of conduct down to the present day.

A few idle strollers are sauntering in the shade between the buildings without ascending the steps to them, or else wan-

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dering round the circular moat, overgrown with reeds, in the middle of which the chapel of instruction stands apart. The circle is the emblem of perfection, and water resembles knowledge in its power of penetration. The silence is broken only by the dull blows of wooden hammers on the thin paper which is being beaten into the stone by workmen occupied in taking a squeeze of one of the stelæ, on which are carved texts from the classical books. My companion is alone in paying a scholar's tribute to the memory of Confucius.

This ex-official of the Imperial court owes his impassive face, with the skin stretched tightly over the bones, to his Manchu descent, his tranquil affability to his Chinese education, and the dignity of his bearing and gravity of his gait to his rank. He is a very honest man, and did not make a fortune. Faithful to the fallen dynasty, he is left without a post and would have no means of livelihood but the income from a farm a little way from the capital if he did not use his learning and leisure in giving private lessons, at which he is very skilful. Not only does he know his classics thoroughly, but, being sensitive to beauties of style, he succeeds without the aid of any foreign language in implanting them word by word in the unreceptive brains of his pupils from Europe and America. The turns of phrase I have learnt from him have already brought me compliments which I pass on to him. "That," he says, "is because, in spite of your age, you have a good memory." In saying this he has requited my courtesy twofold, for China is a land where old age is considered fortunate. When he heard that I was staying at the French Legation, he seemed embarrassed; a moment later he apologized for having to make a slight addition to the very moderate charge for his lessons, since he would be obliged to take a rickshaw, so as not to "lose face," or, in other words, so as

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not to have to blush before the majesty of the place.

On the following day he scratched at my door, and as soon as it was opened his first care was to correct my pronunciation of the words meaning: "Who is there?" and "Come in!" "Your soldiers are terrible," he added with a discreet smile. Yet this was not the first time he had found a sentry in front of an official building, and our men of the colonial force, in their khaki tunics and blue caps, look far too much bored by guard-duties to inspire anyone with alarm. But it is traditional among the literate class in China to make fun of soldiers, very much as our own intellectuals laugh over ancient jests at the expense of the administration.

We rarely discuss political events, for he is aware of my friendship for several members of the party in power and is afraid of offending me by his reactionary opinions. He asks me questions about the play which I have seen or the sights which I have visited, and then tells me a legend or story containing some glorious memory which he venerates. I owe him respect as my master, and he earns it by his assiduity and patience, never letting a thing go until he is sure that I have thoroughly mastered it. But though serious, he is not severe. At table he does not conceal his tastes or his appetite, and has no objection to a mild gaiety, provided that it is always kept within the bounds of seemliness. One day, in talking about the students who are to be met in the public gardens during lecture-hours taking a sentimental stroll with a feminine fellow-student, we agreed in the indulgent conclusion that the attraction between the *yin* and the *yang* is a law of nature—the *yin* being the negative principle and the *yang* the positive principle—a maxim borrowed from the ancient books by our learning in search of amusement.

He was unwilling to accompany me today, and seems out

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of humour, for his country loses face by this deserted temple. He glances, without saying a word, at the sharp-cornered tin vessels on the table of offerings, which stand empty before the memorial chapel with its mouldering woodwork. To see a procession advancing amid the rustle of silken robes and the tinkle of jade emblems of office, to hear the funeral hymn accompanied by flutes, bells, and musical stones, we should have to go to a considerable distance from here, to Shantung, where descendants of the philosopher are still to be found down to this day. The head of the family, whom the Government has not deprived of either his nobiliary title or his pension, holds a service on this day in accordance with the ancient ritual. But in former days the whole Empire used to join in this tribute, from the capital to the chief towns in the remotest country districts. Everywhere temples or oratories threw open their doors, and it was the chief local magistrate, surrounded by his subordinates, who repeated the prayers. Today none but Sun Yat-sen is entitled to these official honours. He is the Confucius of modern times. But why oust the Sun Yat-sen of ancient days? It is on the tip of my tongue to ask my companion this question, but I prefer not to talk to him about Sun Yat-sen.

The building is not an ancient one, but it follows the traditional rules faithfully. The columns, too thick for a man to clasp in his arms, are made of trunks of sequoia-trees sent from America about the end of the last century, for trees of such a size are becoming rare in the Chinese forests. They spring up without a break as far as the unconcealed beams which divide the interior into three transverse naves, of proportions as simple as they are harmonious. There is not a single portrait. In the centre, beneath the canopy of carved wood, is a deep-red tablet bearing in letters of gold the name

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of the "Holy ancestor and master." On either side, facing each other like the stalls in a choir, are four rows of panels, the inscriptions upon which make up the company of his seventy-two disciples. Mr. Tung makes me read them out and his brow clears. I have earned a good mark.

It is now my turn to feel a little uncomfortable, as though I were beginning to stifle in this temple as bare as a school classroom, before this anthology of epitaphs. On the carved slabs which stand in serried ranks outside in the covered gallery, mounting guard over the philosopher's teaching, the rays of sunshine may read that in former days the Emperor's ancestors were honoured in the Temple of Limpidity, where they were offered the "azure beverage"—that is, clear water—followed by raw fish and a great dish of boiled meat with no seasoning. Chinese stew lacked nothing but beef to resemble that of Europe; its mutton or pork, served in the liquor in which it was cooked with various vegetables, was seasoned with salt, fruit vinegar, and other condiments ordinarily used by the proud lords with fur cloaks whose principal dish it was; in which they were doubly infringing the twofold precept which forbade them to blend flavours or wear garment above garment. But by way of compensation for this, the teaching of their august ancestors enjoined absolute frugality.

Our lungs have to adapt themselves to breathing such a pure air, our minds to receiving such tenuous nourishment, and our hearts to maintaining so nice an equilibrium. Man is humane because he is a man and just because he is reasonable. Humanity if unimpaired produces the legitimate affections. Justice unimpaired renders to every man his due. Music imparts the same emotion to all those who listen to it: it encourages humanity. Ritual, on the other hand, in all circum-

Confucius

stances and at every moment, makes us conscious of the limits which the will cannot overstep without encroaching upon the province of others. Rites are the outward signs of justice. Human nature is always alike, reason is always identical. Universal consent will be an infallible guide to morality. It is enough to observe the significance of words to make a father a father, a son a son, and so forth. Duty is as well defined as the explanations in a dictionary.

This is not a purely secular morality. The part played in it by religion is small, but not negligible. Heaven is the emperor on high, of whom the earthly emperor is the representative and son by adoption. By following his nature and being obedient to reason, man fulfils the will of Heaven. Upon this supreme master, too, all earthly events depend; he arranges our destiny, which nothing can change. There are also invisible spirits, and the souls of the dead sometimes appear in the form of ghosts. The reply of Confucius to a disciple who was questioning him about life beyond the grave was: "When one does not yet know how to serve the living, how could one serve the spirits of the departed? When one does not know what is life, how should one know what is death?" The person who received this discouraging reply was a frank and loyal knight, always ready to draw his sword in defence of the oppressed, and so devoted to his parents that he would carry them loads of rice on his own back for several leagues. The Master having shortly afterwards fallen ill, he naïvely offered to pray for his recovery to the spirits of the earth and sky, whereupon Confucius replied: "I have always been praying," thus intimating that his life of instruction and knowledge was prayer put into action. The story adds that Confucius thought very highly of this not very clever disciple on account of his good heart, and showed deep grief when, as was to be ex-

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pected, he met his death in battle. For there was nothing pedantic about the Master, as revealed in these sayings of his which have been carefully collected. He was a very courteous man, who set his disciples at their ease and even jested with them, and, knowing their characters, knew how to appreciate their efforts and be content with the results. In fact, he was just.

Yet it is not his personality that survives in this sanctuary of the scriptures. It is his teaching, laid bare so that all its angles are sharply defined. I know it well. This inaccessible Heaven, this implacable Providence, this intentional breach between the human and the divine, this swallowing up of religion in morality, and this dissipation of morality in works, are characteristic of the reforming spirit which, some centuries later, was to convert another part of Asia to Islam, and of which Catholicism beat back the furious assault more recently still. In China, as in Arabia, is found a free field, without organized resistance; yet it failed to achieve an undivided supremacy. It imposed no fetters upon the soarings of the mind in search of perfect knowledge. Towards the end of his life Confucius himself felt the need of it and regretted the systematic proscription of it. "If I still had a few years left," he would say, "in which to study the *Book of Changes*, I might commit no more grave errors."

The *Book of Changes* is a very ancient document, attributed to wise emperors, and explaining all phenomena in the universe by a combination, in varying proportions, of two principles, the *yang*, or positive, and the *yin*, or negative. Modern physics has recently evolved a similar hypothesis with its electrical charges of opposite potential through which, perhaps, not only material bodies, but all different varieties of ray are formed.

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The combinations of the *yin* and *yang* are represented by formulas in a sort of algebraic system, in which one of them is represented by a broken and the other by an unbroken line. The book, as its title indicates, shows how one combination is transformed into another by a natural process. The object of it, as of all human knowledge, is to foresee what will happen in the future. The group corresponding to each particular case is determined by drawing lots. The Athenians supposed chance to be the expression of the will of the gods and used this method for appointing the archons who formed their governing body. The Chinese used to consult as a diagram the fissures caused by fire in tortoise-shell and the whorled sprays of a plant belonging to the family of the *Compositae* as a delicate instrument for revealing the influences at work in a given field. We have other mechanisms for purposes of measurement, which, though very exact, are strictly limited in their uses. One gives us information about temperature, another about pressure, a third about electrical potential. None of them is sensitive to the spiritual forces which make for the happiness of a marriage or cause a political revolution. Chinese science in the days of antiquity sought a simultaneous explanation of all that happened in the inanimate world, the world of living beings, the human sphere, and the superhuman sphere, through a single system of reciprocal actions and reactions. The *yin* may gain upon the *yang*, or the *yang* upon the *yin*, but if the universe is to go on, movement is bound to continue; and if it is to continue, it is necessary that neither of these principles should be destroyed: the one which has reached the height of its power immediately declines and wanes, while the other increases in force. The problem, thus stated, admits of none but periodic solutions, analogous to the alternation of day and night or

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the return of the seasons. Similarly, in the phenomena studied by modern science, from the heavenly nebulae to the constituent elements producing matter or energy, it, too, admits of none but movements along closed curves or alternating vibrations, and even space itself has ceased to be infinite and come to resemble the surface of a sphere which may be traversed indefinitely without encountering any obstacle, by constantly passing through the same points. This resemblance is no argument in favour of either the *Book of Changes* or Einstein's theories or the Prince de Broglie's undulatory mechanics. It merely proves that the human mind, left to its own unaided resources, recurs to the same conceptions in age after age. It, too, follows a law of periodicity.

This system of morality was a vigorous and necessary remedy for the moral disorder which was then at its height, but it was not and could not be completely efficacious. Interpreted literally, as it was, it imprisoned the life of the Chinese, in whatsoever walk of life, in a network of duties and restrictions like those of the Brahmin in India, which allowed him no initiative and left him no leisure. The forceful national temperament refused to accept this slavery. Its prescriptions were only observed in their full rigour where the respect and homage due to ancestors, by ancient tradition, were concerned. For the rest, the people had a most noble ideal constantly before their eyes, though this did not damp their very keen appetite for pleasure and enjoyment. People drank hard in the days of Confucius, and the greatest poets of China after him—for instance, the celebrated Li T'ai Po in the eighth century of our era—drew their happiest imagery from the brimming cup. At first, before custom had blunted its effects, tea, the fashion for which next became general, produced a delicious intoxication. Opium, which was introduced

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about the end of the sixteenth century, has not ceased to bring relief to men's spirits even nowadays. Like alcohol, it punishes those who indulge in it to excess, and since it is expensive it sometimes happens that a man's fortune is dissipated in smoke. The Government would like to set up a monopoly of it, as in Indo-China, or like that of tobacco in France, and by so doing it would find at once an abundant source of profit and a means of regulating consumption. It is prevented from doing so by a party of extremists which demands prohibition, in emulation of America's action with regard to alcohol. This is yet another aggressive movement on the part of the reforming spirit, and is this time of foreign inspiration.

In spite of Confucius, Chinese cookery has never ceased to study the reactions of flavours upon one another and to invent new ones, arriving by a continuous progress in the course of centuries at unimaginable refinements. Even down to the present day the legitimate wife, in families which have not yet adopted European customs, does not appear before a guest, and it would even be impolite to enquire after her, for in ancient China the home was sacred. Gallantry, however, was in no way impeded by this. As Confucius remarked amusingly: "I have never known anybody love virtue as men love a woman." Even he was obliged to show a certain latitude towards fair sinners who had won favour at court—towards a prince's charming favourite, for instance, whose morals were so light that people went so far as to place an uncharitable interpretation upon the sentiment which had made her send for her brother, her worthy rival in beauty. Since she had expressed a desire that the philosopher should visit her, he could not escape this honour. On reaching the room where he was to be received, he found, as propriety required, instead of

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the mistress of the house, nothing but a drawn curtain, before which he made a deep bow. He knew that the princess was returning his salutation from the musical tinkle of her jade pendants. On returning home a little ill at ease, he explained matters to his disciples by saying: "At first I had not thought of going, but she received me very politely."

At that time the arrival of a gentleman or a dignitary was announced by the tinkle of bells on the harness of the horses drawing his carriage. On entering the presence of the prince he would advance, bend down and touch the ground with his forehead, rise up again, twirl round, and withdraw with a rhythmic movement, being careful to tinkle the jade emblems of rank which he wore at his girdle. We even know from a more recent book of ritual, based upon ancient documents, that they were so tuned as to give out the notes E and G on one side and C and A on the other. Thus the austere moralist and the invisible beauty exchanged their protestations of esteem and respect to these harmonious strains.

We slowly withdraw, though a magnetic power seems to impel us to linger near these buildings which stand brooding like sages in the shade of the protecting trees. When we get outside, we cast another farewell glance at the portico, like a triumphal arch, with its three arcades adorned with bosses and its roofs rising in tiers. In front of it, on an open space paved with beaten earth, some soldiers are unrolling wires. They are a section of telephone-men and respond smartly to their instructor's orders, given in a low voice. I make an appreciative remark on their excellent bearing and Mr. Tung thanks me. Though he sometimes makes fun of soldiers, in accordance with the classical tradition, he is sincerely fond of China and knows that she requires armed force to guard her frontiers. But when I betray an inclination to go and see the

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monastery of the Tibetan and Mongol lamas, which is quite near, he lifts up his sleeve and consults his wrist-watch, saying: "Excuse me, I have an appointment." The Lamaist religion was adopted quasi-officially by the Manchu dynasty, to whose race he belongs and to which he owes his career. But as a faithful disciple of Confucius he considers it superstitious and barbarous.



LAMAISM

It is in the opposite building; one has only to cross the avenue. It was certainly for a deliberate purpose that one of the first Manchu emperors chose this site upon which to build the Yung Ho Kung, or "Palace of Sweet Harmony." His intention was thus to make manifest the twofold allegiance of his ideas to the religion of his fathers and the religious doctrines of the conquered country. No artist could have been better inspired by a love of contrast.

At first sight one would hardly think oneself still in China. The moment a visitor appears, a swarm of beggars descends upon him. There are plenty of needy people in every province, it is true, and it is the duty of a humane man to come to their assistance. But I have never seen a Chinese hold out his hand for alms in the street. When it happened that I was so accosted, and even importuned, it was in Shanghai and by a Russian refugee, who took me for a fellow-countryman and asked me, in his own language, for *tolko odnu kopeiku*—just one kopeck. There has been public assistance in all ages, but of a

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different order, being administered by public or private foundations or based, above all, on the solidarity of the family, which is far closer than in Europe, and on that of the corporate or local bodies, which are inspired by the same spirit, or even on that of friends. The best of Europeans can hardly help feeling an impulse of resistance even when his dearest friend confesses that he is in distress. If he opens his purse-strings, it will be to make a loan, even if this is only a fiction, rather than a gift. But in China a gift is obligatory in such a case. Friendship creates a relationship which may go to the length of adoption. Friends who have sworn mutual fidelity become "sworn brothers," *meng ko*, till death and even beyond, for the brother who has always hastened to the aid of his adopted kinsman is also bound to watch over the welfare of his family if he leaves it in need. Two Chinese of my acquaintance, who have just left for Europe, started by making another journey to the province where their sworn brother lives, and, on finding him in difficulties, each of them left on deposit a sum proportionate to his means, to meet any emergency which might arise. I will not mention how much, for this would wound their modesty, and in Europe it would be considered excessive. In China it is shameful to beg alms of a passer-by, but not to receive a present from a friend.

These noisy children, these ragged cripples with their untidy beards, have the faces of Mongols rather than of Chinese. I have seen similar faces gaping at the shop-windows in the covered market, a collection of shops under a glass arcade, like the Palais-Royal in Paris. They had come straight from their deserts. The crowd of Chinese all round them was smiling covertly at the way in which they were gazing wide-eyed at the cheap hardware—smiling, too, at their hair, plaited in a heavy club like a horse's tail. In the eyes of all these nomads

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the horse is a valuable if not a sacred animal, and this style of hairdressing is worn in honour of it. Tapering into a pigtail, in order to distinguish them from the conquerors, it was imposed by the Manchus upon the Chinese in the seventeenth century, as was also the slanting cut of the sleeve, reminiscent of a horse's hoof. This garb, which so many Europeans believed, and still believe, to have been national, was a badge of servitude, so humiliating that many Chinese preferred death or voluntary exile among the southern mountains rather than wear it.

Those who come here are foreign tourists, whose wealth is proverbial in China, as is also their simple-minded roughness. They are for the most part Manchus or Mongols, and are faithful followers of this form of worship. There are also a few Chinese, who remember the old régime and, in imitation of the dethroned emperors, divide their veneration between the sage of China and the apostles of Tibet. All Buddhist sects preach pity towards all living things. There was a heresy, condemned by a disciple of Confucius called Mêng-tzŭ, or Mencius, some centuries before the appearance of Buddhism in China: it was that of Mo Ti, who maintained that every man is bound to love all humanity equally. But in this he was committing a grave sin against humanity, for he was dividing that which ought to remain united—that is, natural family feelings—and against justice too, for he was distributing these haphazard, regardless of rightful claims upon them. But even then he did not go so far as the Buddhists, who place man on the same level as the animals.

Draped in his blackish robe, thrown scarf-wise across his left shoulder, the lay brother who advances to meet me questions me in rudimentary English: "Will see?" I pretend not to understand, upon which he repeats in Chinese: "*K'an*


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*k'an?*" But the Mongol knows little more of this language than of the other, so we continue the conversation in signs.

Indian Buddhism, transported to China by the second century of our era, at once became acclimatized. Not only did learned monks translate all its sacred books into Chinese, but through their commentaries they provided it with a philosophy similar to that of Taoism. Lamaist Buddhism, which took shape in Tibet at about the same period and was reformed in the fourteenth century, has preserved the language and doctrines of its native land.

The quadrangle is surrounded by chapels with roofs curved in the Chinese fashion. A buzz of voices goes up from almost all of them. It is not a tuneful chant, as among the Buddhists of Hangchow, but a sort of monotonous singsong, pitched on the same note from beginning to end of a psalm. Sometimes, however, the voices of the choir mount up and grow stronger verse by verse, rising chromatically by steps till they reach the octave above, only to descend again and lose themselves in the sombre depths like an anguished supplication dissolving into terror. I venture to glance in at the open door, but go no farther lest I might disturb the service. My guide seems surprised at my discretion. The monks are sitting on rows of seats in one of the aisles, with their sides turned towards three tall seated images representing the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, with leaf-shaped canopies behind their backs.

One chapel is silent. But inside it another brother is watching over a little tin trough in which are stuck some short tapers, only a few of which are burning. He lights a paper spill at one of them and presents it to me so that I may light another one with it. The flames rises and the two monks, bowing their heads as a sign of approval, recite a short prayer to-

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gether, in which I recognize the sacred formula which has passed into their language from Sanskrit: *Om mane padme om*. A bowl standing on the table shows me where to drop my coin.

Then, and not till then, do I raise my head and notice the strange assembly by which we are surrounded. A gigantic infant in its cradle, carved in black wood, with protruding belly and mouth wide open, is showing its gums in a laugh which distends its shining cheeks and draws up the corners of its eyes towards its round, bald head. On either side of it, arranged on tiers of shelves, are intricate groups from which savage faces emerge. Several of them are sheathed up to the waist in gauze transparent enough to excite the curiosity of strangers without shocking their modesty. The attendants then offer to take off the veil, and the stranger pays to see the sight. The two monks are watching me, but do not follow me round, and they are right. Little as I know about their religion, I know that in their eyes all these things are no more than solemn symbols. Why profane them? I divine that this young girl girdled about the waist with filigree, clasping her hands on the protruding bosom of a warrior with wolfish fangs, represents a soul in torment, imploring the "master of the subterranean prison," or, in other words, the king of hell. Another one, crowned with skulls and with flames twisting about her head, has only one eye set vertically in the centre of her brow, but a multiplicity of arms extending like rays. Two of these suffice to keep a little girl firmly seated on her knees. The child screws up her eyes with delight, holding in one hand a bowl and in the other a spoon, with which she seems to be playfully tapping it. It is not her breakfast for which she is asking, however, but offerings for the Buddhist community of which she is an allegorical representation.

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Other still more intimate unions are merely those of a principle with its own manifestation, or a mythical being with its own thought. Lamaism has established for purposes of invocation the nomenclature, attributes, and imagery of those powers of the superhuman world which Confucius did not like to have mentioned to him. Its sacred city on the heights of Tibet is called Lha-ssa, which means the city of spirits.

Groups pass through the courtyard and cross the forbidden threshold into the interior of the monastery. Red and yellow head-dresses mingle joyously, though these are the colours which distinguish the old from the new observance. But the reforms have been concerned with ritual and the rule, not with the dogmas, and in spite of its fierce divinities Lamaism, like all Buddhist sects, is a placid religion. Yet we should not feel too confident of this, after all. In spite of daily prayers and a vegetarian diet, nature sometimes reasserts its rights over these rude children of the mountain and the desert, who would not kill a fly. They are even alleged to be capable of keeping off indiscreet visitors by stoning them like dogs. But I will not cause a scandal which would delay their eternal salvation by several existences, and would certainly not hasten mine.

Nor do I feel any more inclined to make fun of this bronze cylinder under the shelter of a pierced lantern. It is stuffed with prayers, and indulgences may be obtained by turning it. Gross superstition, if we think only of the gesture and the material aspect. But today I prefer to believe that it is not the sign that produces the effect, but the intention which inspired it; this may remain shut up inert here, possessing little efficacy while at rest, and yet be capable, if set in motion by another will, of developing a field of force—virtuous force—round this dynamo of piety.

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"The Emperor K'ang Hsi was a very zealous believer in this religion, and that is why a thing happened under his reign which had never been seen before: a series of good harvests lasting for thirty-nine years." This edifying tribute is not taken from any devotional work, but from an appeal which has just appeared in the newspapers, signed by a number of high officials, including the President of the Board of Examiners, for the erection of a new altar in this enclosure by public subscription, at which services may be held to avert the disasters with which China is being overwhelmed. It is not for a Catholic to deny the efficacy of prayer, even when addressed to false gods, provided that it comes from the heart. May it not be part of the purpose of Providence to foment religious fervour until faith comes and crowns it, and to prepare the ground for the seed soon to be sown? China is not such sterile ground as it has been reputed to be in foreign countries for a century past. Official personages are imploring the divine pity, and their message only needs to be addressed to the right quarter.



## *THE TAOIST*

It was in a great avenue in Pei-p'ing that I met the Taoist. On that October morning the clear sunshine and invigorating air were wrestling with each other like two merry boys. In the middle of the roadway, which, though broad, was often encroached upon by the work of road-mending, the crowded street-cars, with their surplus passengers pouring forth from

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both doors, set up a hum of vibration in the rails, resembling the deep string of a lute, and drove the automobiles and rickshaws advancing at an irregular pace to the sides of the road. At times they were themselves held up to make way for some Mongol camels, already covered with a thick hairy coat in readiness for the winter, carrying sacks of coal between their humps and looking down upon disturbed humanity with their disdainful sneer and rolling gait, impassive as the desert.

It was in a suburb near the entrance to the city. A working-class crowd blocked the sidewalks between the open-air counters of the pedlars and the goods displayed by the second-hand-dealers who were selling books, furs at reduced prices, and rusty bicycles. In this tranquil confusion, free from quarrels or jars, everyone made way for others, stepping aside to right or left as he went about his own business, sure of arriving sooner or later. Before one door, however, a group stood stationary, projecting like a growth on somebody's body and further swollen by those who stopped and added to the congestion, craning their necks to see the show.

There he sat on a stone step, his robe grey with dust, his cap tilted backwards, his face seamed with a network of wrinkles, and his beard like a grey lichen, resembling the traditional figures of those initiated into "The Way," as one sees them in pictures. Indeed, he was drawn, as it were, with so firm a line that one felt oneself to be looking at a portrait rather than a man.

The harmony between nature and art in China to which I have already drawn attention extends to human nature too. The porter I hailed on leaving the boat at Shanghai seemed like an engraved figure out of some woodcut, and since then I have met in drawing-rooms, observed at the theatre, or jostled in the street many a figure which, like the trees and

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mountains in the surrounding country, might have been transferred to a painting on silk almost without altering a line. The mass of people who have been seething in this huge, uncracked cauldron has been precipitated in crystals, each of which has its own characteristic form and clear-cut lines.

The artist imagines and Nature produces. The difference lies in the procedure. The principle is the same and is that of the universe, which the Taoist philosophy calls The Way, for lack of a precise term which cannot be devised. The artist who observes The Way is in advance of Nature. But if given time to work things out in peace, Nature may yet catch up with him.

The old man has a tablet on his lap coated with a viscous clay on which he is rapidly making marks with his forefinger. "It is a fish," says one. "A frog," rejoins another. Suddenly the lines join and a crawfish springs into relief, with its claws bent back, thrown sideways by the lash of the tail which carries it to the surface of the water. An appreciative murmur of applause goes up.

I remember seeing poor fellows far, far away, on the terrace of some Parisian café, earning a few sous by drawing chalk silhouettes on the asphalt pavement. But this man owes his talent to The Way, which is his guide, and he would be quite capable of playing some other trick on us, such as vanishing through the wall, or leaping up at a single bound and grinning down on us from the overhead cable of the street-car line. According to Taoist ideas, there would be no miracle or witchcraft in this; it is merely the natural result of wisdom and practice.

He has noticed me and proposes to read my physiognomy. The crowd falls silent and stands in an inquisitive mass, while he turns on me his opaque eyeballs with their glance turned

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inwards, so that it seems to absorb and not to radiate. He begins by telling me my age, in which he is not out by so much as a year. How did he manage to read it in a face so different from those familiar to him? "You are here alone," he goes on. "You are not travelling for the purpose of making money or for political reasons." And he winds up with a remark which I put on record for what it is worth, so that the reader may estimate its value: "You are no ordinary man"—"*Pu shih hsiao jen.*"

That evening when I described this adventure to a European, he asked: "How much did you give him? A piastre? Well, you certainly had your money's worth." "Yes," I replied, "but how did he know that I should give him a piastre?"

A Chinese friend seemed a little surprised at first at finding me so gullible. Having completed his studies in Paris, and speaking the dialect of the boulevards fluently, he first asked me whether I did not think that "*ce vieux farceur s'était payé ma tête* (the old fraud was making a fool of me)." I declined to believe it. "You are more Chinese than I thought," he replied; and my rejoinder was: "And you are more European than anybody has a right to be." For years past this has been a subject of amicable squabbles between us. Being as frank about himself as he is about other people, he readily admits that in this respect, especially, his uncompromising attitude of both mind and heart may do him harm. But his reason is of a high order and he has a generous heart. Sceptic though he is, he is moved to tears by a fine poem; misanthrope though he is, he reserves the treasures of his kindness for the select few who have succeeded in winning and keeping his sympathy. In return for the little advice which I have been able to give him in his work, he has vowed unbounded gratitude

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to me and treats me with the respect of a disciple. I now receive fresh proof of this, for he sacrifices his own opinions, which he does not readily do, to the desire to please me: "If you care for that sort of thing (*si cela vous chante*)," he says, "I can introduce you to a Taoist who can make his astral body come out of the top of his head." I have often witnessed this operation in the books of this school, in which one sees a sage in a state of ecstasy blowing off through his head a little figure resembling himself, like a jet of steam issuing from a valve. This is not the soul in the spiritual sense, but the formative soul, which does, indeed, to some extent correspond to the astral body of European spiritualism. I should not be at all sorry to witness such a thing at close quarters.

This is why, a few days later, we were waiting in a restaurant in the Central Park, a pleasure-house among the dark trees, beguiling the time by nibbling wafers and meringues which would put European cakes to shame; but this restaurant prided itself upon being progressive, and it was impossible to buy the national dishes there. The sun was sinking, and it was beginning to feel cold in the shade. The room was not heated, which does not inconvenience the Chinese, for it is their custom to wear padded garments even indoors before the winter frosts begin, instead of lighting a fire. But our European suits were a poor protection.

I felt a moment's hope, immediately quenched by a glance from my friend, when I saw a squat, bearded personage approach and sit down beside us as another guest. The electric light was out of order. We had to decipher by the light of a candle the visiting-card which he presented to us with great politeness. He was an Indian rajah who had abdicated and come to Pei-p'ing to found a universal religion. That, at least, is what I gathered, but a little later, when we had to break up

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our party and he left us, I questioned my friend on the subject and he replied tersely: "A madman!"

He was furious at my disappointment. In vain did I represent to him that the Taoist initiate had no doubt played us one of his characteristic tricks and manifested his power by cutting off the electric current. "An idiot!" he exclaimed. "But at least I know that he exists," I said.—"Or that he does not exist."—"It comes to the same thing," was my rejoinder. He smiled, mollified by my last reply. All Chinese with a little education are familiar with the elementary maxims of Taoism, including the one which says that existence and non-existence arise out of each other. But he added: "Once upon a time I studied these doctrines myself a little. It was a youthful error. The ten schools still exist." "Even that of the *yin* and *yang*?" I asked. "Even that of the *yin* and *yang*. But as a rule one has to devote a whole existence to learning to know them."

The ten schools of Taoism all aim at the same thing, but reach it by different methods. The aim is to find The Way—that is, to identify oneself with the sovereign principle whose individual forms of existence, including our own, are only partial manifestations of it. It is not annihilation that is sought, nor is the world regarded as an illusion. It is Buddhism that takes sides in this way. It affirms and it denies. It does not observe The Way. What is nothingness? That which does not exist. What is existence? That which is not nothingness. What is illusion? That which is not true. What is truth? That which is not false. "One does not define a finger by the difference between it and other fingers, but by the difference between it and what is not a finger, or a horse by the difference between it and another horse, but between it and what is not a horse. Otherwise the universe would consist of noth-

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ing but fingers, and all beings would be horses." Thus five or six centuries before the Christian era Taoism was outdoing Kant's drastic arguments against human reason, though without losing hope of knowing what eludes it as yet. The bond between subject and object is not broken. The antithesis between contraries is not a category of the understanding, but a necessity of the world of reality. Every form of being is an affirmation of what it is and a negation of what it is not, so that it is possible, according to the point of view, to assert that these forms of being do or do not exist, including the one that is formulating this idea. Affirmation and negation succeed each other like day and night, and describe an orbit containing within it a void which is no more and no less than The Way.

Neither reason nor meditation is sufficient to attain to this void. Since man has a body, it has to receive attention, to be first taught how to keep quiet, after which the vital energy has to be developed which, finding the outer doors closed, will flow back towards the spirit. The initiate observes a regimen and subjects himself to a system of gymnastics, the most ordinary exercises in which are breathing-exercises. Breath is the least material of earthly aliments; he who assimilates it completely enough to dispense with other nourishment will have a subtilized body, better protected against sickness and death than by any elixir of life. But it is also possible to make matter incapable of injuring us by checking its movement, like that of a clock, through the neutralization of the *yin* and the *yang*. If this is complete, pressure is removed, that which limits is effaced, and The Way appears once more.

The forms of worship admitted by the doctrine of Confucius have no priests save the heads of the family and the State or their representatives. Hence women are legally disqualified.

The Taoist

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Buddhism has communities of nuns, but it is China that has given it the goddess of compassion, Kuan-yin, with her almost Christian gentleness when she bears a child in her arms. Taoism has thrown open its mysteries to women to a large extent. In this it was not, indeed, introducing any innovation, but collecting the beliefs pruned away by the pitiless moralist and allowing them to bear flowers. The written language of China proves that the word for "sorceress" is the original one; the one meaning "sorcerer" is derived from it by adding a suffix. The feminine sex having a negative polarity, a sorceress is necessary to attract the positive fluid, which is that of the male sex, also that of heaven, the sun, and life.

The theory of the *yin* and the *yang* is anterior to the period at which Taoism was organized as a doctrinal system for the purpose of resisting Confucius, but, more prudent than their opponent, the Taoists took possession of this doctrine and adopted as their manual of devotion the *Book of Changes*, which it regretted having studied too late. The combinations of these two principles indicate the order of nature. To resolve the antithesis between them and trace them back to their source is to find The Way. They retain their significance, but are henceforward equal to each other, like two opposing forces in a state of equilibrium. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, day and night, man and woman, being and not-being, life and death, are so many opposites the two terms of which determine each other.

In the year 365 of the Christian era, between the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month, at dead of night, the master Yang-hsi was vouchsafed a vision of which an account has come down to us. The Queen of Invisible Purple, who had already appeared to him before, was this time accompanied by a youthful goddess whose long robe,

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woven out of clouds, had a red bodice and a kirtle of blue. She wore at her embroidered girdle some ten little bells and a jade pendant, "almost as on earth, only smaller." From time to time her garment threw off flashes like "the glint of sunshine upon mother-of-pearl." Her hair, lightly massed above her brow, descended behind to the waist. She was decked with rings and bracelets of pearls, her countenance was of a luminous freshness, and a perfume like that of incense emanated from her. She might have been taken for a girl thirteen or fourteen years of age.

"The Queen having made her sit by her own side, I took my place at the foot of the couch and gazed upon them. The young goddess was presented to me as the youngest daughter of the Lady Li, a mortal who had become divine, and as a Princess of the Exalted Truth of the Supreme Void, and the Queen asked whether I had ever seen such a person upon earth. I answered that nothing I had seen had ever given me an idea of such perfect beauty, at which she laughed and asked me if that were really true. I made no reply. The young girl remained silent. In her hand she had three fruits like those of the jujube-tree, of which she offered me one and the Queen another. They had no kernel and an unexpected flavour, reminding me of a pear. After another moment's silence she asked me my age, and declared that she had long desired to know me, but had not expected to be so happy as to be gratifying my wish in this. But, as I told her my name, I protested that my gross nature and impure substance imposed respect upon me, and, thanking her for her condescension, I asked nothing better than to remain there all night listening to her. 'I hope,' she said, 'that you are not being ceremonious; you ought not to be.' And asking for some paper, she inscribed on it a poem for me; then she rose, and before she had so much

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as reached the door, all trace of her had vanished."

On the following night, however, she returned with the Queen and another goddess who presides over destiny on the mountain of the south, and whose name is followed by the grateful remark: "my instructress." "I have again come to bore you," said the young girl. "I should like a brush to write down some nonsense." For in this way she would be able to interpret her thought more freely than in words.

Her message said: "My name bears witness that I am of your race, so there is no harm in this. It may be said that our prayers are being granted, and, filled with feelings of sincerity, it is necessary that we should set out at once, in the same chariot, for the precious void, traversing the azure company, plucking the crimson fruits inside the jade enclosure, culling the scarlet flowers in the garden on the summit, drinking each in turn the water of the violet stream, washing one beside the other on the shores of the blue waves, wearing a cloak of flowers, a cap of perfumes, and a hat of sunshine, prolonging our course as far as the heights of purity, together doing obeisance to the triple origin, seeing the eight colours rise up and disappear in the curtain of the phoenix, lifting up our foreheads at the gate of the clouds to breathe in the innermost essence of gold, singing together, returning through space to the festivals of night, and there, in the smoke of the perfumes, approaching our faces in contemplation, interweaving our girdles, and joining our sleeves. Is not that happiness? Is it not that for which we pray? We must obey fate, and for my part I shall not refuse, but it is you who ought not to resist, or harbour any mental reservations."

The Queen of Invisible Purple examined the message and found it unobjectionable. The lady of the southern mountain added her kindly advice: "Madame Li," she said, "to whom

The Pleasures of Pei-p'ing

I spoke about you only yesterday, said that you were still assailed by hesitations and impure temptations. Her daughter possesses a talisman which you cannot conceive. You must take each other by the hand. Why are you content with writing? Let the aerial team bear you to the clouds! And if there is anything that you still do not understand, you need only ask quite quietly for information." The young girl smiled, and at this moment the story stops, not out of modesty, but out of discretion.

This is not a question of pleasure, but of bliss. The recompense of the sage is the beauty which descends from the heavens. If he hesitates at first, his scruples point to the lingering remnant of materialism. But the sage is a man; it requires this feminine figure, like a magnet, to tear him away from earth, and these mystic nuptials to complete his deliverance. The lives of the Taoist saints are plentifully adorned with fairy apparitions. But all Taoists are not saints, whether male or female. They are said to be some that approach human beings in search of a transfusion of forces which is not exempt from danger. But nobody dares to mention this philosophic vampirism except in a whisper.



THE PLEASURES OF PEI-P'ING

"No, no, my dress is not pretty, and I am not either." Is this coquetry? It is modesty, rather, for her smile is a little sad. But, above all, it is good breeding, which makes it obligatory to decline a compliment, present, or tribute. The other day,

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when I called upon the charming wife of a general, who was at that time the only person in Pei-p'ing to have invited me to dinner in company with a few friends of his own social standing, I was a little surprised at seeing the manservant come back with my card, bringing the excuse: "Madame has no time." It was afterwards explained to me, however, that she could not have done otherwise. To have accepted my visit would have been to make it apparent that I was under an obligation to her, which would have been most impolite.

There is an incident which I recall, but I should be guilty in turn of a serious indelicacy if I were to speak of it here. Yet that silk, with its iridescent hues like those of a beetle's wing, is in exquisite taste, the delicacy of the wrist is accentuated by a bracelet of grey jade, the little, dainty, pensive, childish face which she raises towards us is almost too small for her soft eyes of a liquid black with their changing gleams of light. A little overawed at first by the intrusion of a foreigner, they grow more at home as they observe me, and light up with a flash of gaiety.

"And do you think me pretty there?" she asks, pointing towards the photographs lining the wall, among which is one showing her in front of a painted landscape, dressed in bodice and skirt in the European fashion. But it is not my answer for which she is waiting. She darts a sidelong, questioning glance at my friend, whose face remains grave as he points without a word to another portrait of a young man with an inscription under it. "That is a student," she says this time, looking him straight in the face. A lovers' quarrel, evidently. I was quite right in not wanting to come and play the ungrateful part of unwanted third party. But it is the only one open to me.

Marriage customs require a messenger between the two families, and the same thing prevails outside the home. It is:

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always necessary to be introduced by a friend. At subsequent visits he is no longer present. But mine will lead to nothing and is merely a prelude in the form of a trio, in which my part will reduce itself to the discreet and easy one of providing only an intermittent accompaniment, as in music of the old style.

"He has promised," she continues, "to take me to Paris with him this winter." Ah! Now it is my turn. "And you will come and see me?" I say, offering her my visiting-card; upon which she opens her handbag and produces her own, a tiny slip of card on which is inscribed her poetical name: *T'ien lan*—Celestial Blue. The servant now brings in the tea-tray, and she explains to her delightedly that that is my address. The other, a good woman of about forty, portly in her blue cotton tunic and trousers, and with a keen, kindly glance, congratulates her in a motherly tone.

Since our meeting with the Taoist failed to take place, my companion has been at his wits' end to devise some way of spending the day which may leave me a better memory of it. First we went to dine at a restaurant, unique of its kind in Pei-p'ing, where women act as waiters. As in all other houses, the entrance leads into an inner courtyard in which carp wait sleepily in the stone fish-ponds till their turn arrives to follow some customer to the upper storey, masked in their brown sauce. Up there the private rooms open upon a balcony, from which they are separated by curtains. As in all high-class establishments, the bill of fare occupies the whole of a closely-written page, and offers a choice of some twenty soups, an equal number of dishes of fish or shell-fish, meat, vegetables, wheaten and other pastes, egg-dishes, birds, and sweets. But it is a little girl who comes and offers us brush and paper for writing our order, together with the indispensable finger-

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bowl and some tea to beguile the time of waiting. This one, who is celebrated for her beauty, bears, as it were, on her shoulders a face like a picture, sketched in almost imperceptible touches against the dark background of her hair, which falls like a veil upon her shoulders. Since I can find nothing to say to her, another one is summoned who shows us her frank, round face without any artifice, lit up by an arch glance beneath her short hair. She takes my hat and puts it on her own head, like a mischievous child, then inspects the bill of fare with a disdainful little grimace, saying: "I am not hungry this evening." But she is called away. They both return between the courses and accept our invitation to sit down. We offer them a browned almond or a preserved currant, which they pick up with the tips of their fingers, without touching the chopsticks. All the same, I am a little put out by their greasy little hands, and the effect produced by the steam from the stoves on their painted cheeks. My friend notices this and hurries on the service. "And they imagine they are following the Paris fashions," he exclaims disdainfully as I precede him downstairs, while a sharp little voice from the balcony calls down to the cashier on the ground floor the amount of our bill and tips. We leave amid the salutes of the staff.

Next we go on to a house which even my guide has some difficulty in discovering in this labyrinth of streets all exactly alike and divided at right angles into equal parts. In response to the servant's inquiry he gives a name and we are conducted across the first courtyard and shown into a small sitting-room like that of a hotel, having armchairs standing with their backs to the partitions. "She is not very pretty," he explains, "but a great talker." The little person who runs up and stands in the other doorway raises her arm at the sight of a foreigner and hides her face behind her hanging sleeve. Not

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that she is ugly, so far as I can judge, but she is suffering from a cold in the head, so that her nose is swollen, her eyes are watering, and she does not feel presentable. This is a very frequent form of indisposition in this climate, for though the season is already cold, people cannot yet make up their minds to light the stoves. It was then that we came here. We had to wait a few minutes—time enough to telephone to the restaurant, where Miss Celestial Blue was invited to meet us. The second courtyard is surrounded by the private apartments. The one in which we were received was furnished entirely in the European style, which in Pei-p'ing, and especially in this old quarter, is a great luxury. But the tea comes from Hangchow. I recognize its penetrating and subtle aroma.

After arranging the cups, the servant withdraws. "Thank you, mademoiselle, I prefer it without sugar." I catch an imploring, startled expression in her eyes. I turn round in surprise, to find that our friend has disappeared. What an unkind trick to leave her alone with this great foreign devil! I should like to say to her, as the master Yang-hsi said of old to the young divinity: "I ask nothing better than to spend all night listening to you." But the words which I hurriedly try to find are lost in the recesses of my memory. She watches me closely, trying to interpret my silence. The terror in her eyes turns to melancholy. "Your friend," she says to me, "is not a true Chinese, is he?" Though lacking the standards at my disposal, she has detected this tinge of the exotic, and this is her way of trying to find a safe subject of conversation. But I have no time to reply. The friend in whom she is interested returns. It was only a false alarm. The servant follows immediately after him and makes a sign as she stands in the doorway. Our hostess rises and makes her excuses: she has to go and join another admirer, but she will come back again soon.

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The servant will stay with us in case we require anything.

Through the communicating door out of which she slips, opening it as little as possible, we see the corner of a richly-laid table. Is this the student who is going to France? He will have much to learn there, for we can hear him describing how the French spend their time at the café, while their wives go out with other men. Nor are other countries better off. In the United States people fight in the streets with revolvers. The Japanese are so mean that they have only one hat between several brothers, who go out in turn. The servant smiles at it all with us as she sits there on her chair. I do not know what Miss Celestial Blue thinks of it, for she cannot get in a single word. The man talks all the time. If this is how he is preparing for a political career, he is quite likely to be a success, provided that he joins a group or becomes a member of a committee. All nations in which public meetings are the stepping-stone to power are liable to get babblers and fools for their masters. But China simply swarms with students of this type, who do not attend their lectures—which, indeed, they are incapable of following, for lack of elementary education—but are prepared to hold forth about everything which is not their business, with the self-confidence of ignorance.

As we exchange comments in a low voice, the door opens slightly, admitting an amused but reproving glance, and silence is imposed upon us by a finger laid upon her lips. We explain by signs that it is growing late and that, to our great regret, we cannot listen to the rest of the lecture.

We have to finish up the evening at a dance-hall not far away. In the low but brilliantly illuminated hall the couples glide and sway, borne on the jazz tunes played by the Russian musicians, with their strong, flexible rhythm. The women are in short skirts, the men in long tunics. They are for the

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most part young, a few of them middle-aged, and they perform the foxtrot and tango steps with ease, for when they choose, the Chinese excel at physical exercises; but there is no attempt to produce an effect by swinging hips or contorted poses, abrupt stops or whirling rushes; the men do not clasp their partners tightly and the girls follow the step, docile and impassive, exchanging only an occasional remark with them in a low voice. Thus Chinese propriety moderates the frenzy transmitted to Europe by America, which had itself borrowed it from savage races.

The tables are set out round the walls. Near our own two girls resting from the dance are rouging their faces. One of them is quite tiny and sits with bent shoulders and head on one side like a child intent upon its task at school. The other, erect and shapely, with a proud expression in her eyes, displays her healthy, robust grace frankly.

The greatest of the changes which have taken place in China during the last twenty years is, I really believe, in the education of women. Not that it had been neglected before then, but it was of a limited variety directed towards the development of delicate, sequestered blooms in the hothouse existence of the inner apartments. Nowadays, when girls are leaving home and going to school, or attending lectures at the university, playing tennis, and sun-bathing at the seaside, we are seeing the appearance of a different order of beauty, which is still only sporadic, because it is opposed to the hereditary influence of many centuries. But if I am asked: "Which do you prefer?" I can reply in all sincerity: "Both." The one with the childish face has none the less proved, and is still proving, the firmness of her character, the liveliness of her intelligence, and the strength of her affections. The other has nothing to fear from a pleasing plumpness, for her race is warrant enough

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for the delicacy of wrist and ankle, and her frankness, restrained by the sure instinct of her sex, will never adopt the mannish tone made fashionable by certain peoples of the north, in opposition to nature's intentions. When *yin* becomes *yang* it is an abomination.



## IN THE CENTRAL PARK

"With us it is marriage that is unchaste." This is not merely a daring paradox. In ancient China, as among the Greeks and Romans of antiquity, an alliance with another family had no object save that of perpetuating the line and so securing that the household cult should be carried on in the most favourable conditions. Not only was mutual inclination not consulted; it was positively distrusted. According to the moral system of Confucius, a betrothed couple were not allowed to see each other even by stealth before the wedding-day. The modern theory of eugenics, which has as its aim the improvement of the human race by compulsory selection, as has been done for breeds of cattle, would seem, if literally and rigidly applied, to be reverting to a similar system. The difference is that in China the auguries were consulted to ascertain whether the offspring would be healthy. Nowadays we should proceed to a microscopic examination and analysis of the blood, for science has adopted different methods. Arranged marriages, which are preferred by the French middle classes, ignore sentiment too, but are decided by different calculations, concerned with fortune and inheritance.

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The consummation of a marriage creates duties of mutual protection and fidelity, but is still tainted with this inherent vice, that the union is merely physical and unaccompanied by feelings of affection. This is why Confucius and, still more, the ritualists who followed him laid down minute regulations to reduce contact to that which is necessary for the begetting of offspring, going so far as to forbid a man and wife to drink out of the same glass or take hold of an object in the same place in passing it from one to the other. But, as the saying goes, they "never went to see" if their rules were carried out, and history, in accord with common sense, shows that regulations which rendered life impossible were never observed without some adaptation. There have always been some most affectionate households and romantic marriages.

Szū-ma, who had assumed the name of Hsiang-ju in memory of an ancient hero, was a young man of good family, born in the capital of his province and possessed of its proverbial good manners. A good fencer and a skilful musician, endowed with a poetical imagination to which some splendid compositions handed down to our day still bear witness, he loved pleasure and soon found himself ruined. A friend of his, an assistant to the chief administrative official of a little industrial town among the mountains, offered him hospitality. He created a sensation in the place, so much so that one day, in spite of his reluctance, he had to go and see a rich industrial magnate who had obtained the concession for the iron-mines and drew a large income from them. A large company of financiers and business men awaited him there, and he was invited to play a melody on the lute. Before such a public as that he played his prelude with a bad grace, scarcely drawing a few notes from the instrument, when he noticed that the curtain in front of him, behind which were the inner apart-

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ments, was being slightly drawn back, allowing him to catch sight of a charming and enraptured face. It was that of his host's daughter, who had returned to her father's house after a marriage which had left her a widow at the age of seventeen.

That very evening she fled with him to the capital in the cabriolet which was left to him from his former days of splendour, while her enraged father declared to his friends: "My daughter is such a fool that I could kill her; she shall not have a penny." The lovers knew the direst poverty. One day, in order to obtain a drink of wine, Hsiang-ju had to pawn his companion's feather collar, but when they had drained their goblets she put her hands round her shivering neck and said that things could go on like this no longer. They next returned to the little town, and with what little credit they could obtain opened a wine-shop, where the iron-master's daughter could be seen arranging the bottles in the cellar, while the poor young man rinsed them in the courtyard, dressed in nothing but one of those short pairs of breeches known from their shape as "calf's nostrils." It became such a scandal that the father had to give in, hand over her portion to his daughter, and consent to the marriage.

These events took place in the second century before the Christian era and are recorded in the history and chronicles of that age. We should search the writers of Greece and Rome in vain for such a refreshing story. But they abound in China.

In principle, however, marriage is still subject to the laws of Confucian morality, which, though they may admit sentiment as an unwelcome guest, regarded as suspect, do not lend themselves to any exaltation of it. Celestial beauty, magical charm, and supernatural felicity can only be rendered in the language and imagery of Taoism. Woman, who would elsewhere be adored as an angel, here assumes the dazzling guise

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of a fairy, or exhales a fragrance that is not of this world, but is the prerogative of the immortals.

In the eighth century of the Christian era the Emperor Hsüan-tsung, one of the most refined and voluptuous ever known to China, exhausted the revenues of his provinces for the famous beauty to whom he gave the name of Yang Kuei-fei, "the precious lady Yang," though in strict intimacy he gave her the still more precious title of True Woman, applied to one of the highest grades in the Taoist hierarchy. It was for her that messengers galloped night and day along the road from the south, bearing her the delicious fruits of the *lychee* (litchi), as fresh as though they were still on the tree. But the misery of the people and rivalry at court led to an insurrection which could be appeased only by the suicide of the favourite, who was buried beside the road on the spot where the Emperor had been surrounded by the enemy. When he returned to his palace a few months later, he wished to provide her with a more worthy tomb. The sachet of perfume which she wore fastened to an inner girdle, according to the fashion of the day, was found intact. On recognizing it, the Emperor burst into uncontrollable sobs.

Nine centuries later, Chao, known as Fei-yen, or "Swallow on the wing," for her light step in the dance, owed the fluid suppleness of her body, if we are to believe the chronicles of the world of pleasure, to breathing-exercises which she had learnt from an old book of magic. Even during extreme cold her skin was never covered with goose-flesh. Her sister Ho Tê, who shared with her the Emperor's favour, emerged from her bath without being wet. They were both adepts of this magic lore.

In a review published in Pei-p'ing, under the title of *Independent Criticism*, by Hou-cheu, a master of modern litera-

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ture, I recently read some verses by one of his favourite disciples, dated Christmas Day 1925, of which the following is a rendering:

"We are seated before the hearth side by side. Our faces are lit up by the glow from the fire. We are talking about the coming season. The dead leaves rustle as they whirl outside. The velvet of the couch is soft. The fragrance of my beloved is like nectar. May, dost thou not wish that so we might remain?"

"The time of joy is quickly past. The trace it leaves is slight. Its memory is like that of spring, poignant and blurred. Sorrow leaves a deep mark, its memory is clear-cut and direct.

"May, when shall we go to the mountain and there become immortals?"

Miss Lu, who added to her Chinese personal name of Hsiao-man that of Rose, having been educated at the Sacré-Cœur, married in 1921 Major Wang Kên, who seemed to have a promising future in store for him. Four years later she obtained a divorce, having accepted the suit of Hsü Chih-mo, and he was celebrating their recent happiness on that Christian feast-day, linking their married intimacy with the thousand-year-old dream of the initiates of The Way, who, having discovered the secret of nature, retire into sudden solitude, secure from death. He did not obtain this high reward.

Punished, perhaps, for having drained too avidly the delights offered him, he met with a premature end last year, as the result of a flying accident, while hurrying back from Shanghai, where he had rejoined his wife, to Pei-p'ing, where his work summoned him. "Love is a tyrant, but I readily submit to its tyranny." This profession of faith explains both his life and his death.

A few months later the Japanese attacked Shanghai, and

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Wang Kên, now a general, was attached to the General Staff. She whose first husband he had been was still in the city. One day, having some orders to deliver, he could not resist his desire to see her again and went out of his way to visit the Hotel Astor, where she was living in the International Concession. He was captured by a Japanese patrol and released in a few days' time, but the documents entrusted to his care gave the enemy information about the plans for the defence and rendered possible the manœuvre which forced the Chinese army to retreat after a month's successful resistance. The general was brought before a court martial and at first there was a rumour that he had been shot. But it was impossible to convict him of treachery or of anything more than abandoning his post. He got off with thirty months' imprisonment, but his career was ruined.

An illustrated paper reproduced a photograph taken on his wedding-day. With head bowed beneath her white veil, the young wife is holding a sheaf of flowers in both hands in such a way as to conceal her chin; in what little of her face is to be seen we may recognize, to quote the words of a song fashionable in the days of Confucius: "Cicala's forehead, butterfly's brows, smile of mischief, and glance of trust." Such are the features which in our own day, too, go to make up a bewitching beauty such as "causes fortress and kingdom to fall," to quote an adage of equal antiquity.

Such was the tenor of our conversation that day—that of the national festival—beneath the shades of the Central Park, Chung Yung. The Republican Government had only to change one syllable in order to dedicate it to Chung Shan, Sun Yat-sen's tutelary exemplar. But the old name is still used, just as in Paris the avenue du Maréchal Foch is still known as the avenue du Bois de Boulogne, in spite of the signs

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put up by the municipality. October 10 is China's July 14, being the anniversary of the decisive battle which in 1911 won for the insurgents the commanding position of Wuchang, in the heart of the land, very much as in France the capture of the Bastille heralded the fall of the absolute monarchy. Some official ceremonies took place this morning which attracted a few curious spectators to the gates of the barracks and administrative buildings. But nobody shouted: "Long live the Republic!" And if the streets were decorated, it was, as usual, by the shop-signs. For the people of this capital, long familiar with the pageantry of power, this glorious day is no more than a public holiday, and the best use to make of it is to take a pleasant stroll.

The sky is clear, the sunshine pleasant. Through the three gates in the monumental, yet lightly proportioned entrance to the city passes an unceasing but leisurely stream of lower-middle-class families, the woman still wearing the old-fashioned trousers and having a child hanging to either hand, the young men in jackets or straight tunics, all wearing felt hats, the elderly men all faithful to the close-fitting silk skull-cap, the fashionable ladies decked in fine silks, less glossy than their hair, with head-dresses, either close or full, which may cover the brow or show it, and are sometimes put on straight, sometimes tilted to one side, with a sure instinct for coquetry. The secular arbor-vitæ trees on both sides of the avenue set bounds to this procession of strollers, as slow and gentle as a river. Their boles, thicker than a man's body, are hoary and fissured, but the sombre leafage which spreads out over our heads rises towards the sky like a vast bouquet, drinking in its light and dew. Their impassive wisdom leads us on towards the Altar of Earth—a square mound, inlaid with yellow soil in the centre, with black and red to north and south, green

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on the east, and white on the west—and after that to a little open chapel, the canopy crowning which concentrates our thoughts upon the maxims inscribed upon each of its eight pillars. The one facing me may be rendered: "To observe unity is what is known as respect; to be exempt from private affection is what is known as unity."

Farther on, that gleam of red among the trees is the painted wooden building of a restaurant, and we take our places at one of the tables surrounding it even at a distance, with nothing but the venerable tree-trunks to keep guard over them. We are observed, however, for after a few minutes a teapot arrives. Since the infusion is still pale, we resume our walk without disturbing anybody. China is the land of good faith. "*Yu jên*—what a lot of people!" says a mother to herself after trying to take our places with the three or four children she has brought with her. It is tea-time, and by the time we return, all the tables are taken, but ours has been respected, together with the newspapers which we left on it.

The next one is occupied by an aged man with a few grey hairs on his lip and chin, wearing a robe of a blue which is almost black and a cap formed of eight sections; he has a number of plates of sweetmeats set before his companion, a young woman of a refined type, whose bodice is cut in such a way as to show her pearl necklace and gold bracelets. He is doubtless a merchant or financier rich enough to supplement his more serious home ties by the graces of a "little wife," upon whom his eyes are riveted. She comes from one of those tea-houses where the superfluous girls of the poorer classes are always welcomed, if they are not too ugly or stupid, and are thus able to come to the assistance of their families. Confucian morality does not allow polygamy, but tolerates relationships of this kind, for the purpose of having children. The entrance

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of these girls into the house is marked by no ceremony. Marriage, which is an alliance between two families, is reserved for the legitimate wife, who, by a legal fiction, is reputed to be the mother of the children. But as a matter of fact the origin of these supplementary heirs is not forgotten; my Chinese friends never failed to mention it to me, when necessary, as a drawback which they deplored but could neither obliterate nor omit to mention.

The old gentleman has excused himself and walked away. The young woman remains sitting there decorously with her hands folded on the table, gazing into vacancy, as though she dare not touch anything in his absence. I quietly arrange my pocket camera so as to take a photograph of this beauty in repose, but she is less unconscious than she appears, and, on the pretext of arranging her hair, keeps her face persistently hidden behind her hand and arm, and remains like this till the return of her companion, who notices nothing and placidly resumes his place. She has reminded me without any fuss that I have no rights over her, even in effigy.

When we turn homewards, the sun has set. The sky is still cloudless and rapidly loses its glow. The families have already removed their children from any risk of catching cold. But a number of couples still linger, their feelings touched by the declining day. Some even profit by the solitude to hold each other's hands.

In ancient China there were no independent women outside the world of pleasure. Those who by a rare exception remained unmarried always found an outlet for their devotion in the home. But during the last twenty years, thanks to a movement of which my distinguished friend Miss Chêng Yu-hsiu was the most ardent promoter, the education of women has developed in this land to an extent which more

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than one European country might envy. In all the universities they are almost as numerous as the men students and often do better than the men in examinations, being less turbulent, more docile, and equally talented. When they leave the university, all careers are open to them except that of arms. And even then there was recently an instance of a rich Shanghai merchant's daughter who enlisted in the army then defending the city against the Japanese, and, when the operations in that region were at an end, joined one of the irregular bands operating in Manchuria, in which she was following the example of many female warriors in ancient days.

Young people, who used never to meet except in the crowds on pilgrimage or during the tumult of a wedding, now have daily opportunities of making one another's acquaintance, studying one another, and discovering tastes in common, and for this reason certain newspapers, such as the *Justice* of Tientsin, have started a special column for love troubles. The advice given is published for the sake of example, but is as much in demand, under assumed names, as that of the hospitals.

A young school-mistress, for instance, is persecuted by the attentions of her headmaster and tells him in vain that she does not love him. He tells her that she ought to be ashamed of such an out-of-date prejudice. The advice given her is, without making any formal complaint against him, to ask to be transferred elsewhere. A girl student suffering from chilblains has been given excellent treatment at a clinic, the doctor coming to see her as many as three times a day, and now that she is cured he declares that he cannot live without her. But it seems to her, on reflection, that he has done no more than his duty; could she not discharge what she owes him for these few extra attentions by making him a present? She is advised

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to be cautious, for it looks very much as if the doctor had designs upon her virtue. A wife has been deserted by her husband, who has made the acquaintance of an educated and coquettish girl student. She is advised to ask for a divorce, which will certainly be granted, or, if she loves the faithless husband too much to give him up, she should cease complaining. A young husband observes that his wife is ignorant and lacking in wit. He, too, has met a student. It is pointed out to him that, where domestic happiness is concerned, the qualities of the heart are worth more than fine words, and that he would do well to think the matter over thoroughly. A sorrowing widower wishes to marry his late wife's younger sister, out of a sort of family attachment which is not uncommon and springs from a very ancient tradition. "I should be a bad sister if I were to refuse," says the young girl, but, having been brought up in the old-fashioned style, she has left all his letters since then unanswered and he is repelled by her coldness. The reply given to him is that a prospective husband should consider no virtue excessive in his affianced wife. A junior clerk has met a young girl in a tea-house and she has confided to him that she had begun her studies but has been unable to continue them, for since her brother was killed in the war, she is the sole support of her parents. He would like to help her, especially as she is receiving advances from two clients of the establishment, both of them rich and old. He is afraid lest "this flower may be withered by the wind and rain." But he is poor. What is he to do? The editor is obviously embarrassed and advises him rather to admire the beauties of nature, to go on working bravely and seek distraction in sport, and raises the objection—rather a weak one, it must be admitted—that there are countless girls of this sort in this world—that is, worthy of affection and pity—and

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it is impossible to save them all. But he concludes kindly with the wish that his feelings may bring him happiness. Such cases are to be met with, I imagine, in all countries. But it is all to the credit of China that they are treated there as matters of conscientious scruple.

We approach the triple gate, which stands out against the paling sky, when suddenly I see my companion blush. "There," he says, "is a thing which was not done when I left China." In front of us, not touching each other so much as with the elbow, a young couple are strolling slowly along, as though reluctant to take leave of this beautiful day. The girl is Chinese, the man European.



## *THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN*

If we examine into the derivation of the words meaning temple in Greek and Latin, they express the idea of an enclosure outlined upon the earth and forming a domain inside which the god withdraws. The stone building is merely, as it were, the citadel in which the statue lives and keeps its treasure. If the faithful are admitted, it is as though to a museum, and not for purposes of prayer. The sacrificial altar stands outside. But in those classical times whose monuments have come down to us, the edifice is far larger than the groves with which it is surrounded, both in height and in bulk. Encroached upon more and more by the expansion of the city; they end by disappearing. The Acropolis at Athens and the



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Roman Forum had no shade but that of their walls and peristyles.

The innate symmetry of Chinese thought has always respected the due balance between the body of a building and the empty space in which it is contained. Except in the outlying working-class quarters of its cities, where, as in Europe, wretched hovels are huddled together, this holds good everywhere, even in the villages, where the houses grouped round the communal well are none the less arranged between courtyard and garden with due regard to spacing. All middle-class dwelling-houses are made up of separate buildings, their wealth being estimated not so much by the size of these buildings as by the area of the gardens, the proportions of the flights of steps and outer galleries. A Chinese building must have air.

The gods of the national religion do not even need a roof to cover them, for they have not assumed a human form, as in the mythology of paganism. Long before Confucius there were incantations for exorcizing the "count of the river" and the "ladies of the streams," the "lord of the rain" and "the master of the thunder," the dragons of the air and water, all the elemental spirits under their variable, diverse, and fantastic forms. While not entirely condemning these beliefs, the Confucian reform excluded them from the Imperial cult, which was reserved for the ancestors of the dynasty whose names appear upon the votive tablets and for a few superior divinities, such as the mountain peaks which mark the four or five cardinal points and are themselves the monuments carved by Nature in honour of these; or heaven and earth, the former of which has as its emblem the circle, symbolic of its hemispherical vault, and the latter the square, representing

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the four directions on the horizontal plane. The antithesis between heaven and earth corresponds to that between the *yin* and the *yang*. The cult of the earth is celebrated to the north of the city, which is its shady side, and that of heaven to the south of it, on which the sun falls. The invocation of the earth takes place at the summer solstice, at the moment when the *yin* has reached its weakest point and is beginning to increase again; that of heaven at the winter solstice, which marks the rebirth of the *yang*.

Passing through the southern gate in the ancient fortifications, a square fortress skirted by the street-car lines, we have to proceed farther, through the dusty suburb, till we find on the left the postern gate which guards the peace of the sacred park. In the days before feudalism was abolished, a poet inspired by a spirit of revolt against the authorities represented to his prince that he was mistaken in supposing himself to breathe the same air as his subjects. The wind which reached his presence and ventured to play with his noble sleeves had come in contact with nothing in his vast gardens except the pure contour of the hills, the cool waters of the lakes, and the masses of flowers, whereas nothing reached the common people but the exhalations from the streets, laden with foul and stinking vapours. Not only do these long, protecting walls keep the bell-like note of voices and the roll of vehicles at a distance, but the very air itself is no longer filled with bustle, but plays upon the lawns with the red leaves which it has snatched from the maples, and hums like an organ with ten thousand pipes among the densely packed needles of the firs, while it accompanies him who saunters along the avenues, and pauses with him before the buildings dotted about in exactly the right position to add the right finish to the prospect.

It was along these roads that, down to the end of the mon-

## The Temple of Heaven

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archy, the Imperial procession proceeded at the icy hour of dawn on the shortest day in winter. Since the previous evening the Emperor who was to officiate had been purifying his thoughts in the oratory, round like all that pertains to the heavens, standing unpretentiously between its slightly curved roof and its marble base. Those glazed tiles farther on under the trees form the roofs of the storehouses containing the pieces of silk which used to be burnt in braziers standing on the ground, bronze trellis-work cauldrons large enough to hold a man.

The altar rises tranquilly in the form of three ample circular platforms, arranged in steps, so placed that the staircases facing towards each of the four cardinal points rest upon a circular gallery running round it on two successive levels before descending to the flat space surrounding it. All round it gleams the whiteness of marble, softened by the translucent carvings of the balustrades and ramps.

The *Book of Changes* lays down the laws of a theory of numbers, based, like that introduced into Greece by Pythagoras, upon musical chords and the relations between the sizes of the pipes giving out musical notes. But the system of calculation was different. In China the even numbers correspond to the negative principle, the odd numbers to the positive one, and perfection is the attribute of all that can be reckoned by nines. That is why, as I stand at the centre, where the Emperor used to take up his position on that winter morning, I see all round me the stone disk like a giant chariot-wheel lying flat on its side divided into nine sectors, each formed of nine rows of slabs, starting with one at the centre, then two, then three, and so on as far as the circumference, which contains nine. The sum of this arithmetical progression is forty-five, the product of nine and five, which is another

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strong number according to this theory. The outer circle contains nine times nine of these component parts. A number asserts its virtue doubly when, as our mathematical terminology still says, it is raised to its second "power."

Gaps are beginning to appear between the slabs. A block of marble carved in openwork which was threatening to fall from one of the ramps is held in place by a wire. But the deserted altar still sends up its silent hymn to the heavens, of which it is the mirror upon earth.

The paved way leads through the young coppices to the tower, firmly based upon the triple terrace of fine-grained marble, which broadens out towards the ground in a series of steps. Its plan is the same as that of the great altar, repeated up above in the triple roof. Each bevelled ring of shadow encroaches a little upon the next step, up to the great crown of blue tiles which tapers gradually upwards to the glittering boss forming its summit. Beneath the rim is a panel on which the same title, meaning "the chapel of the year," is inscribed in Chinese and in Manchu in two vertical lines. In the rotunda-like interior, the carved wooden dome resembles the firmament, being patterned with the constellations, and is held in the centre by a medallion on which the phoenix of good fortune spreads its wings among the coils of the dragon of supreme power. It is supported by twelve columns springing straight from the ground. This is a terrestrial number, and here signifies the twelve months. Advancing towards the centre of this perpetual calendar, the Emperor used to address his supplications to a power which has no extension save in time, but is none the less real, being due to a conception which, though merely intuitive, is analogous to that which has recently been achieved by modern physics through endless

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algebraical calculations, adding space to time as a fourth dimension.



TO THE WESTERN HILLS

The Emperor Mu, who reigned about one thousand years before the Christian era, started out westwards one day at a venture, with eight horses harnessed to his chariot, which travelled a hundred and fifty leagues in a day. At the frontier he exchanged presents with the "count of the river," who opened up the way before him. He passed through the land of the red giants, who offered him and the mounted attendants in his suite the blood of the white swan to quench their thirst and mare's milk to wash the travellers' feet. One evening he reached the shore of the Red Lake at the foot of the K'un Lun mountain, which rises in three successive peaks till it touches the sky.

Profound silence reigns here. In the garden, which I can barely distinguish through the glass door, the flowers are asleep. Beyond lies the open country where, perhaps, the sightless night with sudden, anxious breath stirs the reeds of the pool and the leaves of the poplars to assure himself that they are there. But the dead wall checks their murmured reply.

"On that day, which was a lucky day, the Emperor was received by the Queen of the West. In order to obtain an audience of her he presented her with a jade pendant and a ring of dark jade and then with three hundred pieces of em-

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brodered silk, which she was pleased to accept. On the following day he offered her a feast on the edge of the pool of turquoises. And she sang for him the following song:

“White clouds in the sky,
Mountains that rise on high,
Long road that runs afar,
Broken by stream and mount,
I would that death might spare you,
And hope for your return.”

And he replied:

“I return to the land of the East
To govern the peoples of China.
When they enjoy blest peace
I will return to you.
The time will seem long to me
Till I see this wild land once more.”

In the year 281 of our era the *Life of the Emperor Mu*, which contains this story, was found by marauders in search of other treasures, in a tomb which had been sealed up for more than five centuries. My candle is burning low. I no longer see its reflection in the electric bulb which hangs from the ceiling like a spider at the end of its thread. The current has failed. But this is quite excusable, for we are some thirty miles from Pei-p'ing.

We, too, are travelling westwards, but in an automobile and by easy stages. Mr. Li Lin-yü, President of the Franco-Chinese University, who has arranged this excursion, is one of the best travelling-companions I know; still young and as vigorous in mind as in body, he takes an interest in everything, and whatever subject comes up, he at once surveys it

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with a just and penetrating eye. His every remark contains some fact or idea. If he has nothing to say he remains silent. I do the same. Each of us pursues his own train of thought in peace. Some incident by the way or at the stopping-place which he has arranged in advance to gratify my thirst for information renews our contact with fresh forces.

Thus before leaving the city by the north-western gate we visited the pleasure-palace which the Empress Tzu Hsi caused to be built in what she supposed to be the European style: a clumsy medley of pediments, terraces, and turrets, containing bedrooms furnished with beds, wardrobes with looking-glass panels, and mahogany dressing-tables copied in China with infinite pains from cheap models brought from some English or French factory. But the park surrounding it has magnificent groups of shady trees. And similarly, a few days later, weary of going over the buildings forming the summer palace, which rise one above the other and cover the hill, full of clocks with groups on them, collections of watches and those embossed vases, loaded with ornament, which are also made in China for European traders or for the court of the Manchus, what a joy it was to float away from this white marble boat with its carved rudder and paddle-wheels, and, using it as a pier, start out in a small boat across the glittering lake over which the slender line of the bridge, touched in as though with a brush, humps itself in the distance as though afraid of getting wet, while the tall trees on the shore are balanced by their inverted reflections, as clear-cut as in a mirror, and the long stems of the water-lilies in the icy lake sturdily resist the hand that tries to pluck them. In China it is always Nature that has the last word.

Near the city the car stopped again in front of the Temple of the Five Towers, built, it is said, by an Emperor in the

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fifteenth century in exact imitation of a famous temple in Nepal. Lamaist Buddhism was at that time beginning to make its way into the country before it came into favour under the Manchus two centuries later. China has too many ancient monuments to keep them all in order, so the stones have sometimes to be abandoned to their fate. A country is not a museum. The vaulted roofs are beginning to collapse, leaving piles of rubbish in the passages. But the towers arranged in a square with one in the middle still raise their circular tiers of roofs, looking even more majestic in their melancholy beneath the grey lichen that is eating them away.

Resuming our journey, we speed along the road, and my companion makes no remark. I recognized, however, the ruins of a gate between two stone columns. It is all that remains of the Winter Palace, burnt in 1863 to avenge the massacre of twelve English and six French prisoners. Like that of 1840, this war, in which France was the ally of England, had as its object the opening of the Chinese ports to European trade. The difference was that in 1840 England was alone and only wished to raise the ban on an article of its own manufacture, Indian opium. The order for destruction was given by the English plenipotentiary and carried out by the English army. This special envoy bore the name of Lord Elgin, already famous for the rape of several statues from the Parthenon at Athens. Built in the eighteenth century, the palace consisted of some hundred separate buildings, several of which, to judge from paintings of the period, were a happy blend of the curved roofs of China with the colonnades of our classical architecture. It was not till the following century that Europe and China ceased to understand each other.

When Lao Tzu, having attained to the secret of wisdom through meditation, resigned his modest functions as archivist

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to the Imperial court, he started out, like the Emperor Mu, on the road to the west. At the frontier he was stopped by the commander of the detachment guarding the pass into the closed valley. The commander was an excellent man who loved study and kept his virtue a secret. Having observed a purple cloud spreading westwards in the eastern sky, he knew how to interpret the omen. "I should like," he said to the traveller, "to detain Your Divinity here a little while." Having put him to the test, Lao Tzu recognized his merit and before resuming his journey left him the *Book of The Way and of Virtue*, one of the fundamental scriptures of Taoism. Many learned men maintain that he was going to instruct the ignorant peoples in those unknown regions because, like Confucius, he considered that "where instruction is concerned, there is no distinction of kinds." But he was never seen to come back, unless he transformed himself beyond recognition.

It is not yet nine o'clock. The night will be long, and I extinguish my wretched light in case I require its services again before dawn. We arrived during the afternoon at this rest-house near the warm spring, Wen Ch'üan, which gives its name to the place. The bathrooms are some way off in the same building. The water with which I was supplied was drawn from them. Now, in the quiet of night, I can detect a slight trace of a sulphurous vapour, so faint that it has no smell, but adds keenness and freshness to the air as a dash of mustard heightens a flavour.

We have also had time to visit a model farm. The son of my old friend Li Yü-ying, who is the director of it, is as lively as his father is impassive, and does the honours with a good grace and a pleasant temper, sparkling with intelligence. The cows in these houses yield milk and butter, which I am in a position to praise, for I partake of them every day at the

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French Legation. Chinese cows do not produce milk, so an attempt is being made to acclimatize European breeds. A machine is ginning cotton, though the climate is a little severe for this crop. The vine does well, but the wine is rough. The young agriculturist, who has spent several years in France, is well aware of its deficiencies, and asks us to make allowance for this first attempt. In the village is a large walled enclosure used as a deer park. Every other year the stags' horns are cut, and the pulp, dried and powdered, is a tonic greatly appreciated in China, especially by men getting on in years—which gives rise to exactly the same sort of jests as would be made in France about this or any other more or less efficacious method of rejuvenation. Equal numbers of fallow deer and roes have been placed in the park, but the males refuse to share the females. True to their custom, they go on fighting and eliminating the vanquished until success in the last combat decides which is to be master of the herd. In a state of nature they lock their antlers and no worse harm is done than the breaking of a branch from time to time. But here they butt one another so savagely that the result may be a fatal form of meningitis.

The sun has dissolved in a mass of clouds as towering and gloomy as the wooded slope which we shall have to climb tomorrow. Is that vague pattering the sound of falling rain in the garden? Yet the faint light of the window points to a clear night. On the outskirts of the silence the ear can still divine an elusive sound like an obscure message not meant for us. "That at which one looks without seeing it, that to which one listens without hearing it"—such are the terms in which the books refer to *The Way*. No doctrine outside the Catholic Church has ever shown such a respect for the ineffable or such a deep sense of mystery. Sometimes the truth

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seems very near; all that seems necessary is to brush aside a last layer of darkness through which the uncertain gleam of light seems already to be filtering: "One begets two, two beget three, three beget all beings." This saying, so often repeated since, appears unheralded in the *Book of Changes*, which is at least ten centuries earlier than the Christian revelation. Whence comes this unexpected application of the theory of numbers? May it not be explained by an obscure presentiment of the divine Trinity, glimpsed as though in a dream by a flash of illumination, the mystery of which it was long before mankind once more succeeded in unravelling, once it had relapsed into its pristine weakness?

Still stranger is the chapter in the *Book of The Way and of Virtue* in which the author gives The Way three names, the last of which alone has a sense—that of our adjective "imperceptible"—upon which agreement has been reached, the other two having exercised the wisdom of commentators in vain. When this happens, the explanation which naturally occurs to one's mind is that the words have been chosen by sound alone, as in the transliteration of foreign words. This seems to be indicated by the commentary which follows: "These three words are not susceptible of examination; that is why they are confounded in a single one." They may be read as "*I-hi-wei*," and, when rendered as exactly as the difference between the languages will permit, they correspond to the three consonants standing for the name Yahveh in the vowelless script of the Hebrews. A French scholar drew attention to the coincidence in the last century. The rationalist criticism of the period refused to see anything in it but chance. The Chinese language in times of antiquity contained some three hundred different syllables, not allowing for differences of accentuation. The number of possible ar-

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rangements of any three of these syllables amounts to twenty-six million, seven hundred and thirty thousand, six hundred. Out of these there are six which are a fairly faithful rendering of the three consonants of the Hebrew name. If there was no design in the choice of these three words, the coincidence had only one chance in four million, four hundred and fifty-five thousand, one hundred of occurring.

It is true that these rationalists who were incapable of such a simple process of reasoning were materialists. Being more or less consciously influenced by the prejudices of contemporary science, matter was to them the condition, if not the cause, of thought. Like those physicists who can only represent a phenomenon to themselves through the analogy of a machine, they demanded what they called facts—that is, tangible representations—and believed, with Renan, that the historical sciences would one day be able to reconstitute these scenes of the past with certainty. Before expressing an opinion upon this passage, they required proof that Lao Tzu visited some Jewish community or other, or that some rabbi, whose name they required to know, translated the Bible to him from a copy of known origin. But a fact is still no more than an opinion. Lao Tzu exists for those who believe in his existence and does not exist for those who do not believe in it. All science is belief. What is necessary is to recover the true faith. It can come only from God. Not having received the full revelation, Taoism refuses all credit to the judgments of men, whatever their object and method. I exist for those who know me, and I do not exist for those who do not know me. Which of them is right? I allege that I exist. But this allegation has no value if I do not exist. I do not know whether I am awake or dreaming. I no longer know how to define existence. I seem to be beginning to argue like a Taoist.

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On opening my eyes I see the outline of the table in the middle of the room growing more substantial. I remember that red dot on top of it. It is the magnolia fruit which I plucked by the way, erect like a crest upon its branch. The shadows evaporate, absorbed, as it were, through the window-pane by the grey dawn. We shall soon be starting, for we have a longer day before us and have to return to Pei-p'ing without a halt in time for the evening.

The sun has just appeared, brilliant but a little languid, as though not yet quite awake, darting rays that give no heat along the surface of the plain. The rim of the pool, barely raised above the water, is high enough to cast a shadow over it where it lies veiled in white mist. The path leading across it between dense reeds takes me to a little house whose door I shall not open. It is a silkworm nursery, so the heat of the stoves must not be lost on the outside air, nor must the busy silkworms be disturbed as they spin their own shrouds. On the other side, at the end of this winding path which wanders beneath the sunlit foliage, the air is still too keen for us to stop at the stone belvedere under its sheltering trees, which part respectfully and open up its view in all directions. I retrace my steps and see a man advancing from beyond where I was staying, wearing his working-breeches and carrying a spade over his shoulder. The field labourer's day is even longer in China than in our country.

Between the garage and the building containing the dining-room a postern gate gives admittance to other buildings, on either side of the walk. I enter cautiously, for it is a girls' college. On the left is a large room with desks and benches. The wall facing them is covered with a curtain, which I draw back. A multitude of figures appears, against a network of bright red and old gold. It is a Buddhist fresco in this con-

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verted convent, and has been given this protection in order to save what is left of it, and also, I imagine, so as not to distract the thoughts of the schoolgirls. It is time to leave. I think I hear a footstep. A slight form disappears down the avenue, with head drooping modestly, yet I cannot be sure that a sidelong glance was not shot at me and reached its mark unobserved.

The cars are ready. They advance noiselessly along the smooth road between an avenue of elms. But after a few minutes, as happens on all roads in this densely populated land, we come to a village. While in the city, I had already admired the skill of Chinese chauffeurs in turning, always at a right angle, and in threading their way through the crowd of pedestrians and rickshaws, always slow to protect themselves. But the villages have gates, which often leave only a few inches of free space on either side of the mud-guards, and as we proceed, the space between the walls of the courtyards is hardly any wider, so that one risks running into them even when driving straight forward, unless one can avoid the ruts.

On the steps at the threshold of the doors sit old men basking in the sun. On one side of the road we come upon a heap of sand covered with children, smiling and friendly, like all Chinese children, who wave their hands to us as we avoid them by hugging the opposite wall, while keeping our eye upon the three mules harnessed tandem-fashion which have just come in sight at the cross-roads drawing a hay-cart.

We have now reached the foot of the mountain which rises before us precipitous and gloomy. The forest with which it is covered sends us a gust of rain-bearing wind, and on its summit a dome of grey clouds has condensed, into which the sun has disappeared. The cars draw up before a schoolhouse. My friend Li Yü-ying has been here and left a trace of his

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indefatigable zeal for education in China, which he would like to be secular and republican, as in France.

There are palanquins in waiting for us, wicker armchairs borne on shafts. Each of them is carried by four men, two in front and two behind, walking one behind the other, with the pole resting on their shoulders. If one of the chairmen shifts the weight to his other shoulder, the other supports it without slackening his pace. Scaling rocks or crossing ravines, they advance at a brisk, regular pace, which shakes up the traveller's insides like a bag of nuts. At first I imagine the fellows to be amusing themselves at my expense. But at a turn in the road I see the heads of my Chinese friends behind me wagging as hard as they can go. At this moment the porter in front calls something over his shoulder which I cannot catch, and intimates to me by signs that by leaning out I am upsetting the balance of the vehicle.

The right-hand arm-rest has a hole in it, into which is fitted the Chinese umbrella, as thick as one's arm. We have not yet reached the protection of the trees when the soaking damp condenses into a fine rain. My companions at once put up their umbrellas. With an obstinacy which they must think stupid I allow myself to get drenched. No European can speak without a smile of the umbrella carried by the Chinese soldier as part of his equipment. But in what respect does this denote less courage than hood or waterproof cape? It is an inexplicable prejudice, of which, however, I cannot succeed in ridding myself.

The road grows broader. We alight. On every side are rugged tree-trunks of a reddish brown, rising at a height several times greater than that of a man to where their dense foliage forms an impenetrable mass as close as the tiles of a roof. "*Ginkgo biloba*—maidenhair-tree," exclaims Mr. Li

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Lin-yü, to whom no science, Chinese or foreign, is unknown. This name is doubtless derived by a mispronunciation from the Chinese name *chin kuo*, given to these trees on account of their "golden fruit." Unknown, I believe, in Europe, their origin goes back to a geological epoch almost all forms of life belonging to which have perished. They grow very slowly, but since their life lasts for many centuries, in this climate this enables them to attain the loftiness and diameter of the cedar of Lebanon and the American sequoia.

Raised upon a few steps, the enclosure with the glazed roofs which appear above it nestles in the shade of these giants. It is a Taoist monastery, emptied of its monks, but still frequented by pilgrims, and having as its tutelary principle the philosophic conception of the "Great Awakening." The janitor welcomes us and, seeing that we are wet through, offers us warmth and shelter in his own quarters. Till now I have seen none but luxurious dwellings or palaces. Now for the first time I cross the threshold of a house like those occupied by the vast mass of the people.

The paper windows still further obscure the faint light, and the warmth is grateful. The round cast-iron stove, the saw, the saw-horse on the floor of beaten earth, recall the hut of a French woodman, a lumberman in the Jura; in his free time the janitor goes and works in the forest. But the teapot is on the stove, and the far end of the room to the right of the door is occupied by the *k'ang*, a raised brick platform in the hollow under which sawdust smoulders slowly. It is covered with a layer of felt, and our host makes room for us on it, for nothing is so restful to the shivering traveller as this gentle warmth. Near the window is a pile of old books, no doubt out of the monastery library. One volume is lying



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open, and on the page I read a litany printed in large characters:

"He who prays to the Master of the dark abyss may escape the danger of illness and poverty.

"He who prays to the Master of the dark abyss may escape the danger of the Yes and the No.

"He who prays to the Master of the dark abyss may escape the danger of armed soldiers.

"He who prays to the Master of the dark abyss may escape the danger of fire and water.

"He who prays to the Master of the dark abyss may escape the danger from depraved demons."

As our host sets down the cups of steaming tea beside us, he follows the direction of my glance, but makes no remark, no doubt fearing me to be an unbeliever. Sitting on the chair to which politeness has compelled him to retire, he observes us with a placid smile, taking short puffs at his pipe, whose copper bowl is attached to the straight stem like an acorn to a branch.

My companion having asked me in French if I require anything, he begins to show an interest. "What language are you speaking?" he asks. We explain to him where my country is, and he murmurs: "So far away!"—surprised and flattered on his own country's behalf that anyone should take such a long voyage in order to know it better.

We compliment him upon his trees, ranged like a sombre army round the monastery. "You will not see the finest of them," he replies sadly. "The dowager Tzu Hsi conceived a hatred for it."

The last Empress of China should not be judged by the palaces which she caused to be built or furnished. Being a

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wife of inferior rank and a Manchu by origin, she had neither education nor taste; but she had character. It was she who governed in the name of her little son Tê-tsung Kwang-hsü, kept him in confinement after his vain attempt at a liberal empire in 1898, diverted the Boxer insurrection against the foreigner in 1900, and was fortunate enough to die in 1908 without witnessing the fall of the dynasty for which her despotism was largely responsible. Leaving behind her her furniture, which was that of a European of the lower middle class, she had retired to one of the Imperial palaces, afterwards that of the first presidents of the Republic, where the bed upon which she died has been preserved intact, narrow and black in its Chinese alcove. Her portrait, which hangs over it, shows her when she was already old, with her long face and sunken cheeks and her glassy, implacable eyes. I cannot tell whether she was ever beautiful. But it is not necessary for a woman to be beautiful for men to be her slave.

"I was only a boy," the janitor goes on, "when orders came from the palace to cut down the *chin kuo* of which she was jealous. But I remember hearing it groan under the axe, crying out in a human voice: 'Ooh! Ooh!' She did not survive it long."

The sky is clearing. We enter the monastery, nestling warmly in a hollow of the mountain, with courtyards looking like the cells of a honeycomb between the buildings which stand facing one another, and the covered galleries which connect them. There are large windows everywhere, but the light filters through the oiled paper which fills up the interstices of the pierced wood-carving and checks the profane glance. All the doors are closed. However, as I stand looking at a heavy bronze bell under a canopy, the janitor takes his key and opens the two leaves of the door. Standing in a row

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against the wall are three swarthy figures, gazing at us with unseeing eyes. They have thick beards, broad noses, and uplifted eyes, and their faces expand in an intense joy which diffuses an obscure glow directed towards no particular quarter. They are not gods, but saints, to whom it has been granted to prolong their existence upon earth for several generations before ascending into heaven.

The one in the centre, wearing a long robe and brandishing a sword, is Liu Tung-pin, who met a hermit in the mountains one day and accepted his invitation to rest a few moments under his roof before the hearth, on which a mess of millet was cooking. Liu was first in the list when he took his master's degree, and was appointed to very high posts. He married a rich wife, but suddenly fell into disgrace. As he was crossing a mountain pass on his way into exile and his horse was struggling through a blizzard, he heaved a sigh and heard the voice of his former host saying: "The millet is not yet done." He understood the implied lesson and from that time onwards devoted himself to the pursuit of wisdom. Life is only a dream from which we have to awaken.

The figure on his left, dressed in a torn tunic and holding a wooden rattle, is a beggar who used to dance and sing at fairs. Everybody laughed at him, taking him for a madman, till a day came when a stork was seen bearing him up to heaven to the sound of the pan-pipes. It was then perceived that his words contained an unsuspected wisdom.

The third, riding on the back of an ass, is carrying a cylindrical box cut out of a bamboo. He used to ride hundreds of leagues a day in this fashion. When he stopped, he would flatten out his mount till it was as thin as a sheet of paper and roll it up in the box. Before starting again, he would moisten it with saliva and turn it back into an ass. The statues are

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made of terracotta. When I ask the janitor whether the bridle of the ass is made of gold, he answers smilingly: "*Hsiang chin*—imitation gold."

The monks showed no hostility to innocent pastimes, for leaning against a door I see an incised slab with a pattern meandering like a worm all over its surface, without meeting anywhere. This is a parlour game which became the fashion under the T'ang dynasty, an age of the choicest entertainments, since when paintings and poems have often shown us the merry guests drawn up along the banks of a winding streamlet, watching the little half-filled cups floating like nutshells down the current. One gets caught among the reeds, another goes aground on a projecting part of the bank. The one before whom it stops seizes it and empties it amid the applause of the company. This stone, with its tiny miniature stream fed by a grooved channel, made it possible to play this game indoors on the wet days which are frequent in these parts. Thus we, too, have our table-tennis, though I doubt whether it is often to be found in our monasteries.

Buddhism as originally founded was a monastic religion. Before the introduction of Buddhism into China, in the second century of our era, Taoism had no monasteries. No religion was more flexible, while still remaining faithful to its first principle. But this very principle, which was indefinite in its very essence, admits of all kinds of manifestations indifferently; and thus throughout the ages Taoism has always been found ready to accept the ideas prevalent at the moment, swallowing them as they floated by, absorbing them like a sponge, and eliminating none of what still continues to distend its elastic but insoluble tissue.

The collection of scriptures bearing on this doctrine and its exegesis, which well deserves the name of the "Taoist

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patrology" by which it is known in Europe, includes at one and the same time the *Book of Changes*, with its speculations on numbers, the book of Lao Tzu in which The Way and Virtue are celebrated in a series of philosophic hymns in mingled poetry and prose, as in several parts of the *Book of Writings*, which is almost contemporary with it, and the controversial works which followed when dialectic developed in China almost to the same extent as in Greece; it further contains the lives of the saints, composed on the lines of the biographies inserted in the earliest works of history as soon as it became at all systematic; treatises on alchemy and vital discipline, which, like our own Middle Ages, had as the goal of their search the philosophers' stone and the elixir of life; the "revealed" texts, with which, like Buddhism, which was becoming acclimatized in China at the same period, Taoism was enriched when it drew up its system of theology; the treatise upon actions and reactions which, at a slightly later date, gave it a morality as pure as that of Buddhism; the commentaries by which these texts were enriched by the scholars in the twelfth century, which was an age of philosophical revival; the works in which attempts were made to combine the dogmas of Buddhism with those of Taoism; and even, in the eighteenth century, those which, by an effort analogous to that of the eclectic school of philosophy in France in the following century, were not content with this reconciliation, but demonstrated the harmony existing on essential points between Taoism and Confucianism, an old adversary which was really only a rival sect, akin to it in origin if traced sufficiently far back.

But these various reconciliations always sound the same note, so grave and deep that it can be grasped only by the spiritual ear. Long before my time the Taoist writers were

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appealing to comparisons of this sort. The *Book of the Westward Ascent*, which contains the sermons preached by Lao Tzu to foreign peoples after crossing the frontier, has preserved one of the earliest examples: "Those who do not know The Way vex themselves about words. They cannot hear that which is not said, they are ignorant of origins. Thus the musician discerns the note by the string which produces it, the heart knows these notes, but the mouth can impart none of this. He who knows The Way in its secret and wondrous profundity says nothing about it. He discerns the sadness of sounds, because the inward note is grasped by the heart. If it is necessary to interpret it in words, he who speaks has no knowledge of it."

In order to understand The Way, it is first necessary to be silent. But the silence which is necessary is that of the spirit. One may achieve salvation amid the tumult of the world, provided that one does not listen to this tumult; one may even accept honours, luxury, and pleasures, provided that one's mind is not troubled by them. Works are of no importance; faith is sufficient. Man turns inward upon himself and approaches truth through meditation. Taoism is a mysticism of the intelligence, and its morality is consequently quietist in character. That is why the Confucianists, who are concerned only with works, consider it immoral, which in their system means contrary to public order. But the pity of Buddhism is equally foreign to it, being even condemned by Confucian dialecticians as a frivolous distraction, because it diverts towards the creature the attention which ought to be concentrated exclusively upon the first principle. On the other hand, the *Treatise of Actions and Reactions* contains precepts which Buddhism would not have disowned, such as that of not injuring animals or plants, or that of regarding

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the success or failure of our neighbour as if it were our own. It bases these upon the Confucian idea of the watch kept by heaven and the stars over a man's destiny upon earth, so that good and evil meet with their recompense "as the shadow follows the body." This work dates from a period when the earliest attempts were being made to amalgamate the three doctrines. One of them teaches faith, another pity, and the third obedience, as though Providence had intended to sow piecemeal in China that which the Christian revelation shows upon the world as a whole. The arch in which they were all trying to hold one another up could not stand upright without the dogma which would have acted as its keystone. But were not these unsuccessful attempts a good omen?

The sage who lives in the world wears a commonplace mask in order to hide his treasure. Pascal was a Taoist without knowing it when he talked of the thought "at the back of his head." This precaution is, however, an embarrassing one, and it is better for the spirit to go naked, so that the great stream may pass through it. One of the earliest masters of Taoist dialectics, who was endowed with a powerful imagination and a splendid style, has a famous page in which he compares the organ of the earth with that made by man. That of the earth is played upon by the tempest and the breeze alike, in the depths of the abyss or in the interstices of the forest; but still mightier than this is the organ of the heavens, the motive force of which is the primal breath, and its instrument the universe. The greatest saints of this religion, weary of the society of men, retired into impenetrable solitudes where they listened to the organ of the earth, while waiting till at last they heard the organ of the heavens.

The monastery, which was a collection of hermits, could not go quite as far as this. But it was with the same purpose

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that it sought out this nook which surrounds it as though with a protecting arm, between the trees which form, as it were, its line of defence and those which rise beyond it towards the summit. After thoroughly investigating the site and making a minute calculation of the invisible influences which meet there, it found in this spot the best position for listening to these sounds.

The wall forming the side of the enclosure follows the slope of the hill, and beside it runs a paved path rising in an inclined plane, grooved to afford secure foothold.

Next we come to a rocky path, accompanied by a swift streamlet which amuses itself by leaping across to the other side every few steps, no doubt supposing that it will be happier there. But now a high terrace rises solidly before us, with no way of reaching the top save by two flights of steps, one on each side. Even from close at hand the stone courses fit close together, so smoothly that not the slightest crack can be detected in this polished coating of stone. The turfed level space contains nothing but three porphyry domes. The largest of these towers in the background above the other two, which seem to lie prostrate before it side by side.

Beyond them the gentle, tree-covered slope begins again. This is the tomb of the "Seventh Prince," so called because his father, the Emperor Tao-kuang, had had six male heirs before him. The Emperor Kwang-hsü, who was ousted by the regent Tzu Hsi, was his great-grandson. He expressed a wish to lie at rest beneath the shelter of the monastery without being separated from the two wives whom he loved. But within the area over which the sanctity of the place extends, this spot, rather than any other, was determined by calculations which are more necessary in connexion with the resting-place of the dead than for any other. This is popularly known



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as the *fêng-shui*, or "wind and water," for what is required is to find a balance between these two forces, one of which dissipates the breath while the other checks it. The spiritual soul has taken its flight. The physical soul has the tomb as its abode and must not be allowed to perish by stifling there or wander outside it, where it would become a ghost, *kuei*, possessing powers for evil.

I understand the reason why the guide takes us down the other staircase on our way back, when he shows us a segment of a blackened tree-trunk lying in the ravine, with a diameter exceeding the stature of a man. This is what is left of the tree once felled by Imperial order. It may moulder in peace. The dynasty has fallen. The tree is avenged.

A shower has damped the causeway, which is slippery in spite of the grooving, especially for my leather soles. It is supported upon a succession of walls, so that it is flanked by a monumental staircase each step of which would reach almost as high as my shoulders. Down this I make the rest of the descent. My Chinese friends, a little surprised at first at seeing a literary man of respectable age risking his bones at this form of exercise, soon vie with me good-humouredly. China is a land which loves gaiety.

The palanquins are waiting to take us to a former annexe of the monastery, lying more to the south, and now a forestry station. There is a road leading straight to it, by which we shall return, but there is no means of communication between it and this place of pilgrimage except a path now almost overgrown for lack of use. We have to leave the forest, cross a ravine, skirting the heaps of rubbish left by landslides, and climb a bare shoulder of the hill, with abrupt turns where the porters in the rear of the palanquin have to raise their burden above their heads at arms' length to prevent the poles

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from catching in the bank as they round the corner. But now the one in front signs to the others to halt. He consults his companions, but none of them can make out which track to follow across the broken surface of the yellow hillside. We have to stand aside and let another palanquin take the lead, whose porters know the way better. None the less, it goes astray, for the path leads to a farm, a little house of beaten earth, standing among beds of cabbages and sunflowers. The barking of the dog brings out a peasant woman, broad and squat in her cotton tunic and trousers. "Take the path to the south-west," she says, "and then turn westwards."

I had already noticed in the streets of Pei-p'ing that the rickshaw-men had difficulty in understanding me when I directed them in our usual fashion, by telling them to turn to the right or left. Direction had to be indicated by reference to the fixed cardinal points, but then it was my turn to think hard, and I often made a mistake. The compass has been known in China from the remotest antiquity. The Emperor Huang Ti had "chariots which pointed towards the south" and that is how he found his way through the artificial fog which a hostile sorcerer had raised up in order to lead his army astray. Detached from our surroundings, we divide up space by taking as its starting-point the varying position of our own body and making the world revolve round us at our will. The Chinese, on the other hand, being in close touch with nature, do not forget that it is they themselves who move. The movement of the stars and the magnet provide fixed points outside themselves which are always present to their minds, for, like that other and still more ancient Emperor, they never cease to observe "the figures of the earth and the signs of the heavens."

The farm-woman's directions were good and correct, for

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now the shades of the forest advance to meet us. The path threads its way through it up a steep slope which tips the traveller backwards till his knees are on a level with his head. The porters halt to draw breath. One of them, who is coughing, checks himself when I look at him, fearing to be singled out as sick and so lose his work. They are all in a perspiration and have nothing to protect them from the vault-like chill under the trees. This is a trade at which men are no more likely to grow old than at that of a rickshaw-man.

The retaining wall is as high as a rampart. A stone basin at the foot of it receives the water diverted into it from a neighbouring spring, so limpid that it would be invisible were it not for a brilliant green streak which dissolves just as the eye imagines it has grasped it. Our host descends almost to the foot of the staircase to receive us. His young wife welcomes us on the terrace rather shyly with a deep bow and a smile. Both of them apologize for the frugal luncheon which is about to be served in the north pavilion, or, as I should call it, the one on the right. He has studied botany, geology, and agriculture in France and is director of the forestry centre from which the reafforestation of this mountain mass is being carried out. The principal buildings rise before us one above another on the slope, which continues the ascent behind them, resuming its dark mantle of trees. Access from one to the other is obtained by outside staircases. The square courtyard is shaded by two enormous trees, standing side by side with interlaced boughs. One of them is a male specimen, the other a female. They are like man and wife. Raising my arm, I pluck a bunch of their leaves as a souvenir; spread out like fingers, they are glaucous in colour and of a parchment-like consistency, without any network of ribs. The director comes up and remarks to me that plants with a more complicated

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organization have no sex, adding: "This is an inferior form of vegetable life." He instinctively lowers his voice, and I think of the tree which wept under the axe.

One excellent rule of Chinese cookery is to await the arrival of the guest before putting the pot on the fire. It spoils the flavour of a dish to keep it warm. We still have a few minutes in which to leave the enclosure and venture out on the gloomy hillside, where the roots of the trees close round the rocks like grappling-irons and mark their projections. The silence is only broken by a stream, falling in a series of waterfalls, but invisible beneath the dark moss. We are like those initiated into the mysteries, who hunt for the cloven mushroom, shining among the dark undergrowth, which is said to prolong human life. But they know the formula which prevents it from disappearing as the shadow of the hand falls upon it, as though switched off like a light. And none of us has taken the precaution of fastening on his back one of those magic mirrors in which any woodland spirit which may approach under the deceptive form of a human being is confronted with his true image and forced to confess his falsehood and revert to what he really is, whether it be dog or deer.

Our hosts were too modest. The soya shoots are tender, a savoury fragrance rises from the stuffed fritters, the apples and oranges are as cool as spring water. The room to the right of the entrance rises into a platform on which stand some couches. In another corner the painted figure of a saint with a golden aureole watches over a cupboard full of old books. Above the table, which is set in the middle of the room, hangs a scroll, running the length of the beam supporting the ceiling, on which is a verse, which may be rendered: "Dew on the bamboos, breeze among the pines—behold the highest happiness!"

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This is not the first time I have met with such emblematic scrolls in the house of a scholar. Mr. Li Lin-yü, who had offered me an exquisite tea in the delightful intimacy of his home a few days before, lives in a beautiful house in which every room is decorated with one or two ancient pictures and poetical mottoes in the finest of taste. In all the homes in which I have been received, whether my host was a professor, engineer, merchant, politician, or soldier, I have noticed the same craving for art and poetry. In our lands, it is true, everyone hangs up pictures, drawings, photographs, or chromolithographs on his walls, according to his walk in life; but it is only as a decoration, and often, too, out of vanity. In China specimens of calligraphy and pictures, when not on view, are rolled up and put away in cupboards to rest. Far from displaying them all at the same time, one or other of them is brought out on occasion, the selection depending upon whether it is for a festivity, a departure, family mourning, a birthday, or the reception of a friend. Then, when a new idea presents itself, a different harmony has to be devised, which shall be in true accord with it.

The southern terrace resting upon a shoulder of the mountain looks out upon the nurseries of young trees, in which the offspring of these giants stand in serried rows with their heads close together, so as to support their frail stems. The eldest of them come up to our waists. They will soon leave school, for they are fifteen years old. They will have to face life alone on one of the denuded slopes over which we have passed, separated from their brethren by a distance which will leave them breathing-space later on and prevent them from interfering with one another's growth in the blooming youth of their seventies.

The path ends in a square terrace on the edge of an abyss,

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protected by a narrow parapet. The chapel which has found a home here, leaving only a narrow space round it, is smaller than the little thatched farm where we asked our way, and the round tiles from its roof are already beginning to strew the ground. In front of us, towards the pale east, lies the golden plain with its villages of a lighter shade, diversified by green foliage; then come more hills on which other chapels shine, the dark line of a river, and beyond it the vertical curtain of mist where a shower unites earth with the clouds.

To the south, separated from us by the abrupt gash of the valley, is another mountain peak, the finely-cut contours of whose rocky summit stand out clearly against the brightness of the sunny sky. A tuft of ruddy branches, on which a few leaves still linger, shows above the top of the wall, belonging to some tree which has taken root in a fissure of the precipice. There was just such a tree on the mountain known as the "Terrace of the Clouds." It was a peach-tree, and one day a Taoist saint pointed it out to his disciples, promising the secret of The Way to whichever of them should go and pluck its fruit. One alone ventured to jump over and was fortunate enough to fall among its branches, where he was able to harvest the fruit, throwing the peaches up one by one to his master above. But he could not climb up again, for the branches were too frail and the wall of rock offered no foothold. Then the saint held out his arm, which grew several cubits longer, so that by holding out his hand to his young disciple he was able to draw him up to the mountain again.

I venture to refer to this miracle, the story of which my companions certainly know, though they do not believe in it. But they remain silent, without moving a muscle of their faces, and, like them, I leave my thoughts to dissolve in the air and light in which we are, so to speak, rapt away. I pick

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up a fragment of a grey earthenware tile, ending in a disk on which is stamped a mark, like that of a seal, consisting of concentric quarter-circles, which in this style of architecture signifies longevity. It is to be found in profusion in China, on all monuments and houses. Before leaving, I wash in the pool of clear water at the foot of the staircase this fragment of pottery whose poor appearance conceals so pure a memory.

"When you are going down in the palanquin, you will take care to hold on to the arms, so as not to fall?" Only a woman's friendship is capable of such solicitude. I should like to reassure the lady in Shanghai who expressed her anxiety such a long time in advance and from such a distance. But precautions have been taken against this. The palanquins are reversed, so that we are thrown backwards by our own weight, well against the back of the seat, and sit with our eyes fixed upon the mountain in a last farewell.



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Regretfully I leave the geological museum in which I have spent a most instructive hour. I have seen beautiful specimens of jade and the skull of the celebrated *Homo sinensis*, discovered by Father Teilhard de Chardin not far from here. I have learnt that the instruments made of sets of stones giving forth musical notes were not made of marble, but of a kind of limestone which is denser and not of crystalline formation. These instruments are as ancient as bell-instruments themselves and, like them, give out the twelve semitones of

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our chromatic scale, only with a clearer and more sonorous tone, as I was able to note recently on visiting the temple of the ancestors of the last dynasty. Even Confucius in his day used to strike notes from such stones hanging from a wooden frame, and it is only for the last twenty years that the instruments shown me there by an old court eunuch have ceased to be rung.

Geologically the order in which the strata occur in China is not the same as in Europe. The primary epoch seems to have lasted far longer here than elsewhere, for the deposits then formed—and among them the carboniferous rocks—occur immediately underneath comparatively recent formations. Moreover, forms of vegetable and animal life are found in them which are elsewhere associated with the secondary epoch. Nature had her own plans, which she followed out regardless of local influences.

The young scholar who acts as my guide has an answer to every question, and expresses himself with an ease, precision, and clearness which show him to have a perfect command of his subject. He is one of those who, thanks to Mr. Li Yü-ying's foundations, has completed his studies in France. China has embarked upon a vast and systematic survey, which is evidently being competently carried out, in connexion with all the sciences concerned with the earth: geology, mineralogy, palæontology, and agriculture. In botany, zoology, and biology she is beginning to produce interesting work; for example, what I have read in the publications of the Franco-Chinese University. In medicine China is still learning from foreign countries, but it would be a mistake for her to abandon her national tradition. Dr. Lambert has obtained excellent results at Shanghai by throwing his clinic open to his Chinese colleagues. They are familiar with such processes

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as acupuncture, which have proved their worth and are deserving of study.

Physics and chemistry, now brought into touch with each other through physical chemistry, have not yet progressed beyond the apprentice stage in China, for they are not yet sufficiently advanced on the mathematical side. It was the development of the differential calculus in the nineteenth century that rendered possible the electro-magnetic theory of light, the discovery of electric waves, the study of radiation, and, thanks to its most recent advances, the Einstein theories of relativity. If a certain slackening of progress is to be observed at present, this is because the quantum theory, to which research has been led by experiment and which replaces the continuous by the discontinuous, does not come within the scope of the differential calculus and has not yet perfected its own form of algebraic expression.

The Franco-Chinese Academy of Pei-p'ing has recently published a very good translation of Goursat's *Traité d'analyse*, thus giving students the advice, which they cannot take too seriously to heart, to start with theory, which alone is fruitful, even in the sphere of practical application.

The National Library, where I spent the rest of the morning, has been established in new premises, which, like the Government departments at Nankin, combine the ample proportions and well-lighted spaciousness of the Chinese style with the convenient fittings of the European. The reading-rooms are clean, airy, and provided with large tables lighted directly from outside. The books in their iron stacks in the basement are easy to find and protected from fire. All learned publications, both European and American, find their way there. The Chinese collections include valuable contributions from the ancient palace.

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Philological studies have always been held in great honour and still are. European influence is making itself felt. Scholars vie with one another in denouncing the classical works as apocryphal and, if possible, dating them several centuries later than the hitherto received period. This is a mania which will prove transient, as has been happening for some years past in western Europe.

As at all periods, China still has archæologists of the highest merit. A recent law forbids the export of ancient objects. The two boxes of books which I am taking out of the country will be accompanied by a declaration certifying that they do not date from earlier than the last reign. I am not one of those who protest against this regulation. I know that certain officials are accused of shutting their eyes, or, rather, allowing their eyes to be shut, to certain irregularities, and the director of one museum in Pei-p'ing, who has now been removed from his post, is even accused of having sold a portion of the collections under his charge to a foreigner abroad. If some are guilty of such conduct, then they will have to be punished; but too sweeping conclusions should not be drawn from these examples, or else, by a similar line of argument, people would be justified in not paying their taxes because some tax-collector may have misapplied the funds which passed through his hands, or in refusing to do their military service because such a thing exists as deserters.

Literature was not a lucrative occupation down to modern times. Even celebrated authors presented their works to their friends, and it was rare for these to be collected and published till after their death, by the care of their heirs or disciples. The custom of offering them to publishers is coming in, but the profits are still small, for China has as yet no organization resembling our authors' or book-lovers' societies. The

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newspapers, which are numerous but have a very small circulation compared with that of our own, offer the writer who has no other profession resources which, though regular, are still very modest.

Poetry has recently passed through a serious crisis, under the influence of a very celebrated professor, Mr. Hu Shih, whose object was to restore to it the simplicity of the spoken language, in regular, rhymed verses like those of the English poets, whom he knows well, having completed his studies in America. All that was achieved by this method was a prose of poor quality cut up into arbitrary lengths. The poets of more recent generations are endeavouring to reconcile a more direct and intense expression of emotion with the imagery and rhythms demanded by the genius of the language and taught by tradition.

The novel has never been regarded as a literary form in China. Up to the end of the seventeenth century opinion of it was equally low in France. The short story has been more fortunate, for it has not been despised by certain talented men of letters, and has produced a collection as celebrated in China as Perrault's tales in France, and dating from about the same period, but with a fantasy of still greater delicacy and sensitiveness. Nowadays the short story, or rather the tale (*raz-skaz*), as the Russians say, prefers to take as its subject the manners and, above all, the sufferings of the people. The authors of these ruthless sketches, the biting tone of which would be intolerably painful if it were not for the calm of nature which the writers never fail to choose as a setting, are comparable to Gorky the "bitter" and his young imitators in Soviet Russia rather than to the French realists.

What China lacks is philosophers. Up to the eighteenth century, it is true, she possessed some, several of whom were

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men of genius. It is the infection of European materialism that has caused this sudden sterility. This theory, which flatters itself that it can explain everything by mechanical arrangements of atoms and succeeds in doing so by denying all that it cannot explain, still enjoys the reputation in China which it is losing in Europe. Most Europeans are misled by this and deny the Chinese any metaphysical aptitude, somewhat as Voltaire affirmed that "the French do not possess the epic genius (*n'ont pas la tête épique*)."

Confucius did not deny the supernatural, but forbade the study of it: what exists can be forbidden, not what does not exist. As a matter of fact his prohibition has been powerless against the overmastering craving that urges man to grasp at the hidden essence underlying tangible appearances. But since he took possession of discursive reason in order to use it as the instrument of practical morality, those who desired to go more deeply into things have seized upon intuitive reason and exalted its importance. Thus the Taoist system took shape behind solid walls, sheltered from all controversy. It is not ignorant of rational metaphysics, but studies it solely for the purpose of showing the impotence of reasoning. It has been acquiring a theology, but only under the influence of Buddhism, and always subordinates individual and personal divinities to the first cause, which is one and transcendental and can be approached only through contemplation by those capable of it who have succeeded in preparing themselves by physical discipline and spiritual exercises. The aim of Taoism is to attain to a sort of beatific vision—if we may make use of Christian terminology by way of analogy—and to do so through a direct channel, without the assistance of any learning, either human or divine. This ambition may, perhaps, be regarded as presumptuous and vain, but should not be ac-

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cused of error as regards the object at which it aims.

Taoism has few avowed followers nowadays. But it is just as much a product of Chinese thought as is Confucianism. These two elements in varying proportions are always a necessity to Chinese philosophy and are always to be found in it in combination. There is not a single Chinese, however rationalist he may proclaim himself and however much he may despise mystery, who lets a single day go by without a few moments of concentration, in which he renounces the action which dissipates for the meditation which restores unity, and, in instinctive obedience to the Taoist rule, sends up a wordless prayer.



## *THE GREAT WALL*

Seen from afar, it is like a ribbon of stone stretching away over hill and dale, regardless of gradients and clinging faithfully to the natural contour of the ground. Beside it runs a road, raised upon a mass of masonry four or five yards in height. The roadway, paved with slabs, which runs between the parapets is wide enough for two carriages, and links together the square bastions on each successive height, which stand crowned with battlements, each high enough to cover a man standing upright. History records that this work was begun by the first Ts'in Emperor, who created, or restored, the unity of China about the end of the third century before the Christian era. He employed on its construction prisoners condemned to hard labour, who were numerous under his

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reign, for his justice knew no mercy. But in this spot, only about sixty miles to the north-west of Pei-p'ing, the architectural features exactly resemble those of Nankin, showing that the wall here was restored at about the same period—that is, in the fourteenth century.

The yellowish limestone mountains are bare and arid on both sides of the wall. But at our feet, near the road along which we have travelled, a little farm nestles in a ravine under the branches of a few fruit-trees, bearing witness that behind the shelter of this enclosure the domains of China are turned to use down to the last clod of arable land. The bridge across the streamlet is prolonged along both banks by a battle-mented wall. On the other side the wall divides into two branches, which will reunite again farther on, forming a redoubt-like enclosure and providing a double line of defence against the invader. The train from which we have just alighted at the station of "Blue Dragon Bridge" continues on its way southwards, disappearing into a tunnel in the direction of Kalgan and Mongolia.

What was required was protection for Chinese territory against the incursions of nomad hordes, whose horses were grazed in the "grass-lands." Farther towards the south-west a palisade of stakes sufficed to keep off the tribes scattered through the mountains which separate China from Tibet. Apart from fortresses and entrenched camps this is the first permanent work of fortification by which a country has attempted to protect its frontier with a lasting material barrier which should make it possible to reduce the size of garrisons. In times of peace the wall sufficed to overawe the irregular bands. It was an inadequate defence against an army, but it gave time to bring up reinforcements to the points threatened. It formed a covering system. Thus during the two centuries

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sired. China has never had the same prejudice against men of other nations as the Semitic peoples, who considered them unclean, or the Romans, who used the same word to express an enemy and a foreigner, or the Pan-Germans, who still talk of exterminating or reducing to slavery all those unfortunate peoples who are not of their own kind. Chinese morality is entirely based upon the virtues of justice and humanity, which are common to all mankind both in their principle and in their application. Not only has China never laid an interdict upon foreigners or held them accursed; she has always taken an interest in the history and geography of their countries, as well as in their manners and beliefs. The official histories of all the dynasties contain a summary of what could be ascertained about other peoples known at the time. Exotic music was held in high honour and was regularly admitted to court concerts, together with its instruments, a few of which, such as the guitar and the two-stringed violin, were adopted by China. Indian Buddhism, Islam, Tibetan Buddhism, have in turn been allowed free entry into China. The same was true of the Nestorian sect of Christianity, to whose development a celebrated inscription of the eighth century bears witness, and which still had a bishop in Peking in the thirteenth century.

Towards the end of the same century the first Catholic missionary was received in the capital: the Franciscan Giovanni di Montecorvino, who had travelled by the overland route, the only one then known. The Great Wall never stopped peaceable travellers. Peking became the seat of an archbishopric, and Catholicism spread without difficulty till the fall of the Mongol dynasty, in 1368, after which the reaction against it caused the expulsion of the forms of worship it had favoured. Thus Nestorianism was finally abolished.

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before the Christian era and the one which followed it the Huns wore themselves out by incessant fighting and were ultimately subdued, while another body of them started out on the way to Europe. This danger had hardly been removed before it became necessary to continue the struggle against other tribes, and China was twice invaded, in the thirteenth century by the Mongols and in the seventeenth by the Manchus. Negotiations went on in the intervals of fighting. Chinese policy has never forgotten the precept laid down by an ancient treatise on strategy: "The highest art is not to turn a hundred battles into a hundred victories. It is the height of art to subjugate the hostile army without joining battle." Attempts were made to bring home to the most redoubtable of the leaders what advantages they would find in entering into regular relations with a rich and civilized land. They were granted these in return for doing homage and the payment of a small tribute, which placed them under a régime similar to what we call a protectorate. In order to secure their fidelity they were readily allowed to enter into matrimonial alliances with the Imperial family. One of the finest of ancient Chinese dramas has as its subject the departure of one of these princesses, who has to leave the Emperor in spite of their mutual attachment. It is entitled *Grief in the Palace of Han*.

Faced with these turbulent neighbours, China often found herself waging a war of legitimate defence, and the superiority of her institutions was evident. Relations were much the same with her neighbours on the south-west and south, the Tibetans, Burmese, Annamites, Lolos, Miao-tzŭ, as well as with the Koreans and Japanese, though in the case of these two the difference between them was smaller. She only asked to live at peace with them and instruct them if they so de-



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sired. China has never had the same prejudice against men of other nations as the Semitic peoples, who considered them unclean, or the Romans, who used the same word to express an enemy and a foreigner, or the Pan-Germans, who still talk of exterminating or reducing to slavery all those unfortunate peoples who are not of their own kind. Chinese morality is entirely based upon the virtues of justice and humanity, which are common to all mankind both in their principle and in their application. Not only has China never laid an interdict upon foreigners or held them accursed; she has always taken an interest in the history and geography of their countries, as well as in their manners and beliefs. The official histories of all the dynasties contain a summary of what could be ascertained about other peoples known at the time. Exotic music was held in high honour and was regularly admitted to court concerts, together with its instruments, a few of which, such as the guitar and the two-stringed violin, were adopted by China. Indian Buddhism, Islam, Tibetan Buddhism, have in turn been allowed free entry into China. The same was true of the Nestorian sect of Christianity, to whose development a celebrated inscription of the eighth century bears witness, and which still had a bishop in Peking in the thirteenth century.

Towards the end of the same century the first Catholic missionary was received in the capital: the Franciscan Giovanni di Montecorvino, who had travelled by the overland route, the only one then known. The Great Wall never stopped peaceable travellers. Peking became the seat of an archbishopric, and Catholicism spread without difficulty till the fall of the Mongol dynasty, in 1368, after which the reaction against it caused the expulsion of the forms of worship it had favoured. Thus Nestorianism was finally abolished.

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concessions. The French Republic profited by these equally with the monarchical governments. In 1882, when the Holy See signified its intention of sending a nuncio to Peking, Monsieur de Freycinet, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, frustrated this project, threatening, if it were carried into effect, to recall Monsieur Lefèvre de Béhaine, who represented France at the Vatican.

It is not surprising that missionaries have been regarded in China as covert agents of European policy, opening up the way for its encroachments. This prejudice still exists, especially among young students, whose patriotic zeal is often tactless and always misinformed. But the Government does not hold this opinion. Sun Yat-sen, who was a Protestant, already showed overt sympathy not only for his own sect, but for the Catholic Church. He was no materialist, and knew that if the body requires sustenance, so does the spirit. Those who have succeeded to his power are following his example, as could be seen not only at the commemoration ceremony in 1929, at which the Catholic Church was represented officially, but also on several other occasions.

"There is one fact worthy of being called to your notice. In the Government of Nanking more than half the members composing it—I mean the cabinet of ten ministers—are Protestants. Protestantism in China is preparing the way for conversion to Catholicism."

I venture to borrow these lines from a letter written to me recently by His Excellency Lu Tsêng-ch'iang, now the Reverend Father Lou, at the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-André in Belgium, where the eminent diplomatist, once an ambassador and Minister for Foreign Affairs, took the vows on October 4, 1927. His family had been Protestant for three generations. Confucius had a disciple who was playing the

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lyre; when he played a few wrong notes, the sage remarked: "He has mounted the threshold to the outer hall, but has not yet penetrated to the inner apartments."

During the last two pontificates the Holy See openly expressed its interest in the propagation of the faith in China, and the wisdom of its counsels has already led to very happy results. Since 1922 the Sovereign Pontiff has been represented at Pei-p'ing by an apostolic delegate and but for the opposition of one of the European chancelleries would be represented by a nuncio. But the title is of less importance than the worth of its bearer. Monsignor Constantini combines with an ardent faith a most lucid and generous intelligence. The Church owes him not only its great authority, but the fact that it is now on quite a new footing of mutual confidence and amity with the Chinese nation. In 1924 the first council of Chinese bishops drew up the following declaration: "It is not for us to denounce by word or in writing the defects of the Chinese people, still less to condemn or despise its customs, institutions, or laws, when these are not overtly bad. In temporal affairs recourse can only be had to foreign authorities in case of absolute necessity, after all other means have been exhausted. All missionaries should take pains to maintain relations of politeness and amity with Chinese officials and magistrates."

On May 10, 1926 His Holiness Pius XI for the first time appointed six Chinese bishops to six vacant sees, thus proclaiming by a striking example his intention of calling upon the national clergy to collaborate with the missionaries in future even in the highest offices of the Church. And the letter addressed to the apostolic vicars and prefects in China on the following June 24 laid down in decided terms that "missionaries are not called to the accomplishment of their sacred

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task by civil governments, but by God Himself."

On August 1, 1928 a message was sent out from the Sovereign Pontiff not only to the priests and the faithful, but also to the great and noble Chinese people. Transmitted by wireless and reproduced in all the newspapers, it caused a great sensation, for in it we read that "the Holy Father desires that Catholic missions should contribute towards the peace, well-being, and progress of China," and sends his "ardent prayers for the peace and prosperity" of a land which His Holiness regards "not only on a footing of perfect equality, but with a feeling of genuine and peculiar sympathy."

The outward and visible sign of acclimatization is the formation of an art. The Reverend Father Gresnigt, architect of the Catholic University, Pei-p'ing, has shown by both ancient and modern examples how the painting, sculpture, and architecture of China lend themselves to the production of religious images and the needs of prayer.

In 1926 the encyclical *Rerum ecclesiae* recommended the establishment of religious orders in all countries in which missions were active; for these orders provide the highest expression of the faith, exert a permanent action, and attract exceptional souls. This advice was heard and followed.

China today possesses fourteen Catholic bishops. On the initiative of the Reverend Father Lebbe—who divides his time and zeal between China and Europe, where he has made numerous conversions among Chinese students and founded a Catholic centre for them at Louvain—a Benedictine monastery was founded in 1926 in a fine position in Szechwan, with a monk from Solesmes, the Reverend Father Joliet, as its prior. It was also the Reverend Father Lebbe who has founded a religious house for the Little Brothers of St. John the Baptist at the Monastery of the Beatitudes, not far from Pei-p'ing.

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A Trappist monastery has recently been established in the same province. In these abbeys, as in the Jesuit, Lazarist, and Franciscan Congregations and those of the Disciples of the Lord, and of the Divine Word of Steyl, novices and monks of Chinese nationality are to be found in yearly increasing numbers. There are, moreover, thirty-six Congregations of Chinese women, comprising three thousand nuns.

The number of Chinese Catholics is now 2,532,000 in all, giving a ratio of one Catholic to every 182 inhabitants. This is a very small proportion; but after so many vicissitudes it gives no cause for alarm. The future promises better things, though more than one trial is no doubt still to be anticipated. In the stirring words of the Scriptures, recently quoted by Monsignor Constantini, faith must "hope against hope": *Contra spem in spem*.

The Catholics of China have produced many admirable examples of fervour, conscientiousness, and courage. They are already respected. The Church will gain still greater prestige when it is known to be capable of finding an answer to the loftiest speculations of Chinese thought—a power in which it surpasses all the Protestant sects.



PARTING

"*I lu p'ing an.*" Alone henceforward on my homeward journey, I still hear in memory, accompanied by the dull thudding of the wheels, the kindly wish uttered by a friend: "Peace all the way." To which I replied, using the correct formula, first to the two chauffeurs outside the station and then to the group of friends who repeated this wish on leaving the train as it began to move slowly off: "*Chieh nin ti chi yen*—I borrow your well-omened words."

I have, indeed, brought them with me, carrying them away together with my distended suit-cases, which I reopened at the last moment to slip in yet another book or portrait adorned with a fine inscription, and the ancient lute, which I must carry in my hand till I reach Paris, warmly swaddled in its woollen cover, for no trunk is long enough to protect it. *I lu p'ing an.* All my friends, with voices more or less high-pitched, but modulated to the same tones of their singing language, joined to form a musical chorus, though without any well-defined harmonies; and its murmurs, pent up beneath the rounded ceiling of the railway car, still echo like responses to a psalm in the nave of a church. With faces either fresh and young or lined by age, they all flashed on me once more the same bright smile, now, as it were, detached from them and clinging to me in my swift flight. If I take good care of it, it will not fade before my arrival, when other friendships will meet me and "receive the breath of my course, *chieh fêng.*"

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On the slab in front of me I see a cup and a pot of hot tea, which a noiseless, attentive hand placed there as soon as we started. I add a box of cigarettes, and this is how I shall spend the three hours between here and T'ientsin, gazing out of the window at the flat country, where the setting sun casts a crimson glow over the black earth, scattered with trees that are still green.

The Chinese clerks in Cook's office looked up and then at once looked down again at their registers on recognizing the persistent Frenchman who came every day and asked for a ticket for Paris *via* Mukden. They knew by heart the words of the dialogue which would ensue with their English chief: "Impossible!"—"Why?"—"Dangerous."—"I shall claim no compensation."—"It is forbidden. You will have to travel *via* T'ientsin and Dairen."—"I do not want to travel *via* T'ientsin and Dairen."—"Then you will have to wait."—"I will come back again tomorrow"—"Very well, then. Come back tomorrow." But this conscientious official had no doubt ascertained my identity from the French Legation and had possibly been enlightened with regard to the mentality of this peculiar traveller, for I was preparing to go over the same ground for the fifth time when Monsieur Wilden came out of his office, as though by chance, and stopped me in the hall: "You know," he said, coming to the point at once, "that according to my information, one train out of four is held up and robbed between Pei-p'ing and Mukden." "What!" I replied, "three chances out of four of getting through? Splendid!" He smiled and returned to his room, leaving me already regretting my rash rejoinder, for I realized that I should have to follow his advice.

So that is why I am travelling eastwards today, turning my back upon Europe, to which I want to return, and unable to

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refrain from cursing the Japanese, who are forcing me to take this roundabout route. Before September 18, 1931, the fateful day upon which they occupied Mukden, on the pretext, afterwards recognized to be false, that a small part of the railway had been torn up, the trains ran a little less rapidly, no doubt, but as regularly as they do between Paris and Lyons or Berlin and Leipzig.

A misfortune is never undeserved. Those with which we are visited are warnings. China has just suffered aggression and lost a province its rights over which were unquestionable. Of the thirty million inhabitants of Manchuria, twenty-eight million may be reckoned as Chinese, or else Manchus who have become exactly like the Chinese in language and customs. They are mostly tillers of the soil, and it is their labour that is developing a territory large enough to contain both France and Germany. But as Mr. Li Yü-ying foretold to me in Nankin, Japan is beginning to feel the consequences of its error and would have reason to repent it if its pride would allow. There is great poverty in the land, the struggle between parties is fierce, and Japan is obliged to maintain several armies in Manchuria without restoring order, for the whole population is roused against the invader. In similar conditions it was the Peninsular War that struck the first blow at Napoleon's power. In the words of the proverb recently quoted by a Chinese journalist, Japan has lately "swallowed a bomb."

The nations of Europe and America look on at these squabbling Asiatics more or less disdainfully, not realizing that they themselves present a still more lamentable spectacle to the latter. It was thought that this war, which was a perfect massacre, would at least have had as its result to allay bitter feeling, but on the contrary it has exasperated it. The two nations vie with each other in the jealous watch which they keep over

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their frontiers, stopping travellers by means of passport formalities and checking trade by the constantly rising barrier of the customs tariff. Enemy subjects are still suspect, and allies are becoming so. Suspicious glances, insulting words, and unpleasant treatment are exchanged on all sides. Since things have been so arranged that the cost of the war has not yet been met, and probably never will be, both states, faced with their debtors and creditors, are equally enraged with the former, who declare themselves insolvent, and the latter, who claim their due. Bitter recriminations are followed by threats, and may at any moment lead to blows.

The textbooks from which we learnt our history boast of the ease of communications, which has abolished wars between province and province and rendered the famines which ravaged the Middle Ages impossible. If we measure distance by the time it takes to cover it, all Western countries are no more than provinces or districts of Europe, each in arms against the rest, and we have seen the reappearance of famine under the disguised but chronic form of unemployment. The "subsistence of the people," the third of the principles included in Sun Yat-sen's program, lies outside the sphere of our governments' competence, for they possess only political power. If they interfere with subsistence, it is at the request of the financial or industrial powers which supply them with the money they require; and this only increases the distress of the majority. As soon as any commodity becomes plentiful, measures are taken to prevent the price from falling.

In his last work Sun Yat-sen cites with indignation the example of a great landowner in Yunnan, who burnt a few tons of cereals every year for lack of transport which would have enabled him to sell what was not consumed locally. If he had lived till our day, he would have known that mountains

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of wheat are being destroyed in the United States, while in Brazil the furnaces of railway-engines are heated with shovel-fuls of coffee-beans; thus he would have learnt that the social problem is not solved by the progress of machinery.

Nowadays a good crop is a catastrophe. If the soil is lavish of its wealth, its gifts are rejected. If the peasant still prays at all on Rogation Days, he prays that his fields may be unproductive. Have we not merited exemplary punishment for such ingratitude and sacrilegious prayers?

Politicians in China are no better than our own, but they cannot be worse. Their dissensions and knaveries have left the land defenceless and without resources in its hour of peril. But no nation since the beginning of history has been exempt from surprises of this kind. Some countries are the hirelings of national or foreign finance, others are at its mercy. It is the same thing everywhere in this age when the power of money knows no limits in the temporal order of things, because there is nothing else to share it. The rights of birth are obsolete, craft guilds have been destroyed, and, in spite of their praiseworthy efforts, trade-unions have failed to revive the solid organization of the guilds, in which the most highly skilled and educated were the masters.

Some large fortunes do exist in China, but each is administered at its own sweet will, and the movement of capital is not yet on a sufficiently large scale to produce a concentration of it. There are plenty of banks, and in general they are prosperous, but they are negligible in size by comparison with the establishments in European or Europeanized countries. A bad government, or a weak one—which comes to the same thing—has the same vices in China as elsewhere, but to a different degree, being more exposed to temptation where foreign interests are in question, and under less strict control where

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internal affairs are concerned. It is not the Government, for instance, that will intervene to protect iron-masters, save loan societies, or protect the grain, meat, sugar, or petroleum markets against the risks of falling prices.

The economic system in China is no better than that of Europe, but it is less disturbed. Nine-tenths of the population are farmers, and mostly small farmers, who, after paying their taxes, are left with barely more than will just keep them from starvation. In the cities there are multitudes of small wage-earners—pedlars, rickshaw-men, or manual labourers, known as "hard-labourers," or, to use the English transliteration, coolies—who are no better off, and the factory-workers, who are comparatively few in number, are no more so. But this poverty, which has lasted for centuries, shows no signs of getting worse. On the contrary, it is in many respects decreasing, for the Nankin Government has a program of public works which is now beginning to be put into execution. All the railways damaged during the civil war are running again, especially the Pei-p'ing-Hankow and Pei-p'ing-Nankin lines. Over fifteen thousand miles of telegraph lines have been constructed and nearly nineteen thousand miles of new roads, several of which have motor-bus services. A large hospital has been equipped in Nankin, a central laboratory of hygiene at Shanghai, and several clinics at Pei-p'ing. When we know the difficulties against which the Chinese administration has to struggle, we cannot but congratulate it upon these preliminary results.

In Europe and America the conditions of existence have been revolutionized for a large number of people, who have suddenly been reduced to poverty or deprived of work. Nothing of the sort has happened in China, which knows nothing

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of what we call the "crisis," because every man has remained in his own station. Men who have lost their social standing are only to be found among unemployed intellectuals or outcasts with no calling. The former type provides Communism with its leaders, the latter with its soldiers. Between these two comparatively shallow strata at its two extremities, society preserves its balance, and Communism is gaining victims rather than converts. The outward sign of this stability is the currency, the exchange value of which does not fluctuate, whereas that of Japan has fallen by two-thirds during the last year.

Several times in the course of its history China has proved that it does not need political unity to form a nation, for order is maintained by the family and the associations modelled upon it, and cohesion is secured by uniformity of manners, language, and ideas. It is true that the spoken language varies between one province and another. The same was true of France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as can be seen from the speech of the Limousin student in Rabelais or the Gascons in Molière's comedies. But China has never had more than one literary language, not two, as France had in the Middle Ages. Syntax and rhythms are the same everywhere, and there are only a few expressions which betray their homely local origin. The same is true of the arts, in which none but connoisseurs can discern the shades of difference that distinguish the northern style from that of the south in painting, music, and architecture.

Chinese civilization has spread through all the regions it has occupied like a mortar, which has immediately solidified, forming a block which can resist the test of centuries. For the first time a crack is appearing in it, for by its reform of educa-

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tion the new order of things is breaking up the family. China is in danger. We must pray for her salvation. She is a nation of worthy people.

Whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, talkative or silent, anxious, phlegmatic, romantic, jovial, sceptical, passionate, timid, or resolute, all those who have come near me during my visit are still present with me in this railway-car, where the lamps are now being lit, isolating me from the dark countryside. I recognize the characteristic features both of their faces and of their characters, which are more clearly defined than in Europe, as though carved out of a more close-grained substance. And I know quite well that they are not exempt from human weakness, and that, as everywhere else between heaven and earth, there are good men among them, but sinners too. But like the voices which bade me farewell, their various influences blend in such a powerful emanation that I can feel it like a palpable breath, from which I myself breathe in goodness. The vital spirit is raised to a higher power there than in Europe, but it is always kept in connexion with other existences as though by an electric circuit. Affectionate, sensitive, upright, grateful, faithful, such is man in this country in his natural state. I am reminded of a remark made by the Reverend Father Lebbe after thirty years of his apostolate: "The Chinese are the cream of souls."



*THE JAPANESE BOAT*

An Englishwoman, and, above all, an Englishwoman of Tientsin, has every right to be as light and brisk in her movements as a black-capped tomtit, with her eyes like brown beads, an upper lip slightly shaded with down, and a brilliant smile. But what you have no right to do, my dear young lady, is to bring the whole of your family up on the top deck, where we have our quarters, and hold a court there till we sail. You have monopolized the five armchairs, and there are no others. Your lively group with the dog gambolling round it blocks the way along this corridor, about as long and broad as the passage in a modest suburban villa in London. The other corridor, on the port side, remains unobstructed, but apart from the fact that the stir on the quay cannot be seen from it, it contains what I may perhaps be allowed to refer to as an isolation post, the only one on this deck, outside which it is not only unpleasant, but indiscreet to mount guard.

I walk forward and lean against the rail. If I close my eyes, the discordant quacking of the ducks, which seem to be calling to one another, reminds me of the departmental motor-bus on market day on a road near my home. But set out on the forecastle on a higher level than our deck, I can see the round baskets, looking like flat huts with their conical lids, in which these birds are confined, and a young Chinese boy playing with a tame magpie.

The sun is beginning to rise, but its rays still glance off the



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surface of the muddy water, turning it a golden yellow. We should have started at eight o'clock, and it is now nine. The plank gangway still holds us fast to the pier, though everything is stowed away, both passengers and cargo, and the little steamer looks like one of those Japanese sets of shelves on which, by ingenious arrangement, using every cranny and dovetailing things into the right corners, every shelf and drawer is filled to overflowing. It is impossible to put any more in and impossible to remove a single thing and place it elsewhere. We are all fitted and squeezed in with the nicest calculation, and shall have to stay where we are till the whole contents are poured out simultaneously on the wharf at Dairen tomorrow morning at nobody knows what time—which is of no consequence, for the train which makes the connexion with the Trans-Siberian Railway at Harbin does not leave till ten o'clock in the evening.

The clerk who received me at the Grand Hotel, T'ientsin, on the previous evening remained alarmingly imperturbable when I impressed upon him that he must not forget what time to wake me. But he was a Chinese. I had to trust him, and, sure enough, at half past six there was a knock at my door. An hour later I found another traveller on the steps outside, who was too fair and rosy for a Frenchman, and even more impatient than I was to see the car arrive which was to drive us to the harbour. The Japanese company which runs the service to Dairen has only two boats at its disposal, which ply to and fro irregularly and are able to carry some hundred passengers third class, but sixteen at most first class. We had failed to obtain places on the other one, which left yesterday, and missing this one would keep us here in distress for several days.

On board the boat a little yellow man in a white uniform,

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grave and silent, directs us with pointed finger towards the same cabin. We glance in one after the other and find that our united suit-cases leave a winding, irregular trench between them, giving access to the bunk on the opposite side, but allow no room to let down the wash-basin.

At ten o'clock the lines are at last cast off and the boat starts, threading its way carefully among the hidden mud-banks. There is a local pilot on either side in the bows, and as they heave the lead in turn, they call out the soundings in that English mixed with Chinese known on the Chinese coast as pidgin English. Why not in Japanese? I guess the reason, so shall not inquire.

At eleven o'clock we are herded down the stairs to the lower deck and into the oblong dining-room, in which the ready-laid table is, so to speak, inscribed like a "similar rectangle," between the wall-bench and the chairs. Sitting elbow to elbow, in silence, like prisoners, we swallow the tasteless fish fried in egg and breadcrumb and the canned peas served in their own liquor. Half a dozen Asiatics are grouped together at one end of the table. The other Europeans are Russians, perhaps Whites, perhaps Reds, but alike hirsute and suspicious.

The afternoon will be a long one, and there is no saloon. We move our armchairs round with the sun, for it is not warm; first to the starboard side, and then aft as evening approaches. I do not address a word to anybody, not even to the man sharing my cabin, who seems as much put out as myself. But having left my place—taking care to place a book on it—to walk up and down our promenade of forty paces under the awning, I find a coquettish Chinese lady sitting by herself apart. She has doubtless lingered over her toilet and has not yet finished it, for she has glossy hair, a bloom like a peach on her cheeks, and plucked eyebrows re-

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drawn with a pencil and is now polishing her crimson fingernails, curled up in an armchair and smiling over her work, when the English girl runs up with a rug which she holds up to show her from a distance. The other one raises her head and throws out her hands in a gesture of surprise and confusion. They are sharing the same cabin and have succeeded in becoming acquainted better than we have. The Chinese girl does not refuse to wrap up her legs and knees, which are not very well protected by her silk stockings and short skirt, but with half-closed eyes, scarcely moving, she indolently allows her new friend to tuck her up more comfortably, pulling the rug tight till it closes like a bag, and resembling, with her merry laughter, a little girl who has found some brilliant beetle, torpid with the cold.

I sit near her at the evening meal, and we both smile because there is a Chinese lapping up his soup noisily in the old-fashioned style, which is now considered vulgar or provincial. I hazard a remark in my poor English, which immediately receives a pleasant answer, in the tone of voice and with the accent of cultivated society. After this we resume the conversation, including her neighbour in it—rather laboriously, for neither of them knows more than a few words of the other's language, but without a pause till we come to dessert, when, as I pass her a bowl of scarlet *kakis*, I venture the statement that it is an excellent fruit. "But I am afraid," she replies, with a rapid glance at my plate, "that yours is not ripe enough." In a turn of the hand she has picked it up and replaced it by another. If she were French or Chinese I should tell her that I should like to keep it in memory of her. But I feel it better simply to stick my spoon into it and express my satisfaction.

On returning to my cabin, I find the other occupant there, and this time we make friends, each offering the other the

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better bunk. He is an American engineer on his way back from Japan, but he has spent a week in Pei-p'ing—time enough for him to have divined something of the might and grandeur of Chinese civilization. We walk up and down the deck for a while, but the cold drives us below, and since it is not yet nine o'clock, we descend once more to the dining-room, which is turned into a bar in the evenings. Five Chinese are gaily playing at *ma-tsaio* and make room for us next them, while two stunted, scowling Japanese drink their lemonade at the other end of the table, talking only in a low voice.

We have drawn lots to decide which of us is to go to bed first. It is my turn to wait, so I resume my walk alone in the feebly lighted corridor. Yet I recognize that shadow which trembles and takes to flight at my approach, forgetting that we are in an enclosed space, and that, cannoning off the balustrade like a billiard-ball after a few steps, the more she hurries, the more often she is bound to meet me. She doubtless regrets her imprudent gesture at dinner-time and remembers what she has been told about the audacity of Frenchmen. But I cross over to the other corridor, to receive my reward on the following day at the hotel in Dairen, where we meet in the hall and she acknowledges my greeting, no doubt the last I shall give her in this world, with her brightest smile. I notice the surprise of the American engineer, who is going out with me, but, like a gentleman, he makes no remark, and I do not either.



DAIREN

The bears and the ants. If we are to believe the evidence of legend and the Greek derivation of their name, the Myrmidons under the command of Achilles before the walls of Troy invoked this insect as their ancestor, or, as modern science calls it, in its language borrowed from the savages, their totem. So the comparison has nothing offensive about it. It is what comes into one's head at Port Arthur when, on top of a hill where the Russians had built a fort, one visits the museum in which the Japanese, in their pride at having captured it on December 18, 1904 after six months of hard fighting, collected their booty scrap by scrap and now exhibit it, accurately labelled in glass cases: obsolete rifles, sandbags, field-telegraph apparatus, broken pickaxes, remains of rice and tea, epaulettes and buttons from uniforms, heliograph reflectors, medicine-bottles, and clinical thermometers. The chauffeur who drove us there and acted as our guide deciphers the inscriptions in his language, while I read them out in Chinese, for Japan has to have recourse to Chinese written characters for the purposes of its literary or official language, adding only a few suffixes, which are themselves borrowed from the Chinese.

This is how we spend our free afternoon. Thirty miles across the peninsula, along an excellent road, between hills where autumn pleasingly diversifies the green lawns surrounding the white houses by the yellow and red of the foliage. But on our way back we regret the lateness of the hour, which

forces us to pass by the archæological museum without stopping, for according to the notice handed to us at the hotel it contains a thousand objects of prehistoric interest, seven hundred throwing light upon history and geography, and a number of Mongol mummies. It is the patriotic chauffeur's fault, for he would not spare us a single shattered casemate or a broken cannon.

I am pleased to find that I get on very well with this American engineer, who, like me, is going to Paris. Since the evening before, when we began to establish contact with each other, we have been putting each other to the test as our conversations proceed—an indispensable precaution, for neither of us has the slightest knowledge of the other's antecedents, education, or opinions, or—a matter which cannot be ignored when travelling—the state of his finances. But we are now on terms of confidence, like a pair of decent people safe from want, and now that our conversation can proceed without any mental reservations, I am enabled, as time goes on, to appreciate more and more a very frank and pleasant companion, who knows how to look at things and judge them and is, moreover, witty. "All is in order so far as we are concerned," he says, in talking of our two nations. "But supposing that the rules of the game are changed, what shall we do then? We cannot eat our gold." While waiting till it is time to start, we stay chatting all by ourselves in the bar, bright with polished mahogany. Talien is the Chinese name of this town, called Dalny by the Russians when they took possession of it and known to the Japanese as Dairen. The centre of the city is a circular open space on which converge broad avenues, flanked by tall buildings with stucco mouldings, like show pieces of pastry, or the palaces built in 1900 for the last universal exhibition in Paris. The hotel occupies one of these

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ambitious buildings in which its apartments with bathrooms, its dining-rooms, drawing-rooms and smoking-rooms, expand at ease; nothing is wanting, in fact, but travellers.

This morning I took a short stroll before luncheon on another sector of this circular space, where an exhibition of chrysanthemums was being opened. All round me I heard on the asphalt the clatter of wooden clogs, like little stools raising the Japanese women higher when they walk—not that this was much use to them, bending as they did under the weight of a baby on their backs, which hung there as lifeless as a doll, or would soon be doing so, and walking with eyes submissively cast down while the men lounged in the front rows in European dress, smoking their cigarettes with an air of challenge and elbowing one another so as to get as much room as possible. The flowers rose one above the other in tiers beneath the roofs of the stands, like curled heads of every colour, trying to look past these touchy shop-clerks and arrogant bank-employees at the floating kimonos of their timid companions, and seeming to call to them as each lifted up its ticket like a signal, with its name, evoking the autumn breeze, a celestial perfume, or the moon on the sea, inscribed on it in Chinese characters.

Japan having learnt literature and the arts from China, Confucian morality and the Buddhist religion have produced a rather scanty but solid and refined civilization, capable of abnegation and of gallantry, though of neither tenderness nor magnificence. It has not entirely disappeared, but has been driven into exile on its own soil, where it is left to old people in the country, fisherfolk along the coast, or ignorant women. Those who are educated take lessons of Europe and believe themselves capable of equalling and even surpassing it, because they have factories and workshops, build armoured bat-

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tleships and airplanes, open hostilities without any declaration of war, and admit of no right between peoples but might. But unfortunately during the last fifteen years our educational curricula have begun to undergo a change. What they have learnt by heart and can repeat by rote from end to end is no longer accepted except with certain reservations, if only of style, condemning war and prescribing that before disposing of a territory the votes of the inhabitants should be taken. Japan presents herself before such an assembly as that at Geneva with assurance; but her speeches, though given a courteous hearing, are greeted with an embarrassed silence. How is it to be explained to her that the principles invoked by all the governments in Europe and America at the beginning of the century have now lost their force? On the other hand, it has become far easier to come to an understanding with China. She is no longer accused of hypocrisy and cowardice, as she used to be. Our ideas are drawing closer to hers, for since she first began to think for herself, she has never ceased to prefer the arts of peace to those of war, or to take the precepts of morality as the basis of politics.

It is time to take a last look round my room and make sure that I have not forgotten anything. Once again, when I ask for my key, the Japanese girl at the desk offers it to me with an arch little smile, as though we were children playing a game in an imaginary hotel of their own.

The one in the bar seemed to say with equal archness, as she sold me a packet of cigarettes: "What a fine game we are playing!" But the chauffeur on receiving his tip, the waiter with the bill of fare, the clerk at the mail-window, all remained impassive, as stiff and solemn as a soldier presenting arms, without a trace of feeling on their lifeless faces.

The women hide their features behind an artificial smile

The Chinese Child

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as though behind a fan. They are a people always on their guard, performing an obligatory duty. In China politeness is a supple and elegant garment; here it is a cuirass.



## *THE CHINESE CHILD*

There was a stop of twenty-five minutes at Mukden shortly before seven o'clock in the morning, but being pleasantly lulled by the motion of the train, I did not open my eyes till eight o'clock. But one should never regret things. What should I have seen on the platforms of that station under military occupation but Japanese sentries who would have prevented me from leaving the station, perhaps even the car? But at Ch'ang-ch'un, where we arrive at two o'clock in the afternoon, the station is still divided between the Japanese and Chinese authorities, being closed on one side and open on the other; so we profit by this to take a turn round the town, since the train for Harbin does not leave for an hour. My companion still has two or three plates in his camera, which he wants to expose before reaching the Russian frontier, photography being forbidden on the territory of the Soviet Republics.

The children I had seen in China, whether rich or poor, whether petted or in rags, were all nice, friendly, smiling, and innocently trustful, as though the cruelty of man was a thing unknown to them. When we drove through villages, the boys in the streets vied with one another in taking off their hats to us. If we stopped, they would come up and ask questions about our journey or the engine of our car. Near the

## *The Chinese Child*

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tomb of the Ming emperors, not far from Pei-p'ing, a child of three brought me two of the red fruits which are common in those parts and are known in France as *kakis* (persimmons). When I asked the price, he repeated the question without understanding what I meant. He had not yet been taught that everything in this world may have its price.

In this town of Ch'ang-ch'un, a name meaning "long spring-time," a little boy, seeing us stop at the corner of an avenue and focus our camera in readiness for a subject to present itself, guessed what we were looking for. He came and stood at the right distance to make a good foreground, but declined to accept anything for his pains. He contented himself with keeping us company during the rest of our walk, telling me, in the dialect of Pei-p'ing, that he attended school and was fourteen years old, and pointing out on the way a soldier, a customs official, and a hunter carrying a dead animal rather like a small polecat, which was a sable. He escorted us as far as the train like this, consenting at last to eat a few sweets which we bought him at the station buffet. He was clean, well-kept, and had an attractive face. He wore a blue apron coming up to his neck and a fur cap in the Manchurian style, with its flaps turned up and tied on top of his head with a ribbon. He certainly had good parents, who looked after him and took care of him to the best of their abilities. When the train moved on he was still standing there waving good-bye to us with rather a sad smile. Since then I have often thought of this little Chinese boy, whose town is now the capital of a rather insecure government against which the whole country is rising. His young life will be passed among dangers. Will it survive them? I shall never know.



HARBIN

Harbin, like Dairen, is a Russian city, built on the official plan usual under the old régime, monumental in its proportions, but suffering from age and weariness and having no new tenants to renew the plaster on the house-fronts and polish up the brasswork. The hotel in which I spend the night offers me an apartment whose lofty ceiling, spacious rooms, and white woodwork were once worthy to receive a high official of the Empire. But the doors no longer shut, for the wood has warped. The hot water is rust-coloured, providing me with an iron-bath without extra charge. But all the staff are Russians, which means that they are obliging and affable, in a way which makes them enter into conversation at once, giving the traveller the pleasant illusion of being among friends.

I start the morning at a photographer's, also Russian, for I had omitted to provide myself with a portrait, of which the Soviet Consulate insists upon keeping four copies in memory of my visit. After this a young messenger-boy, who has already told me the story of how he comes to be in exile here with his mother, helps me to draft the answers which I have to fill in to a whole list of questions. I am asked what are my political opinions, which rather embarrasses me, for I have none on me. Where can I get any? By his advice I declare myself "of no party, *bezpartiiny*." "You speak Russian very well," he says. Is he giving me a piece of advice, or

The Customs Official at Manchuli

voicing a suspicion? Suppose I were to be taken for a Russian disguised as a Frenchman and denounced as such to the authorities, an inquiry would be insisted upon. The result of it could not be doubtful, but it might take a long time. I shall have to be careful about my accent.

I am invited to luncheon at the French Consulate, where I am cheered in the most friendly and gracious way by Monsieur and Madame Reynaud; and it takes all their kindness to relieve me of my anxiety. Midday arrives, and my passport has not yet received its visa. The porter who brings me this unfortunate piece of news promises to deliver it at the station by three o'clock, a few minutes before the train leaves. I am sorry to part with my charming host and hostess. They have too much perception not to excuse me, if I admit, in spite of all, how glad I am to see from the window of my compartment the flat white expanse of the river Sungari, which the train crosses on a metal bridge, leaving the station at Harbin behind us.



THE CUSTOMS OFFICIAL AT MANCHULI

Yesterday evening at nine o'clock I strained my ears in vain when the train stopped for a few minutes at the station which serves Tsitsihar. A battle had been in progress for some days near the river Nonni, which we are about to cross. But it can only be supposed that there is now a lull in it, for we hear no

The Customs Official at Manchuli

noise. The bridge is intact. We may sleep in peace.

At one o'clock in the afternoon a band of Russian porters takes possession of our luggage for the customs examination at the frontier station known, from the name of the province whose doors it opens or shuts, as Manchuria in Russian and Manchuli in Chinese. The station officials and even the custom-house staff are nearly all Asiatics. I am unfortunate enough to find in front of me, at the other side of the little wooden counter on which my luggage has been placed, a severe Manchu who will hear of nothing outside the regulations. I obediently offer him my little camera, so that he may tie a string round it and seal the knot with the official seal; but he is quite unmoved. The long parcel wrapped in a woollen cover and containing my ancient lute seems to rouse his suspicions. In spite of my explanations, he expresses a wish to examine it closely. I have to unwind its wrappings. The black wood is disclosed, so I have not been lying. But he taps the gaping joints with his finger, thinking it possible that I may have concealed forbidden papers in it, perhaps a secret correspondence. Next I have to open my flat steamer-trunk with hangers, and he carefully counts the underclothing and suits, while my more fortunate travelling-companions have already left the hall. Through the window I see them settling into their places in the train, which is about to start, and I begin to find the time long.

This japanned tin box which I bought in a bazaar at Pei'ing was full to bursting-point, so I thought it necessary to supplement the locks with some wire, for they were too badly fitted to withstand the pressure from within—a further cause of suspicion to my persecutor, who insists upon examining its contents. By his orders a junior customs official cuts the wire with a pair of scissors, and the lid flies up like a cham-

The Customs Official at Manchuli

pagne-cork. A fur is disclosed. I point to the price, which strikes him as absurd, and he appeals to the other officials, who are now at leisure and have begun to form a ring round us. They servilely imitate his incredulous smile. But suddenly his eyes light up. He has just seen a large white envelope, well hidden at the very bottom, and pounces upon it like a beast of prey. A transformation takes place before my very eyes: "Mei Lan-fang! You know Mei Lan-fang?" The envelope contained nothing more nor less than a portrait of the celebrated artist, with an inscription in his own hand. The inflexible official helps me to fold up the fur, whose value he no longer tries to dispute, and enters on the luggage ticket which I shall have to hand over to the Russian authorities on the Polish frontier in a week's time: "Ancient Chinese musical instrument—*kitaiski muzykalny instrument stary*," so that it may be sure to pass through without difficulty. His colleagues, who were crushing me with their irony a few moments previously, now nod their heads admiringly, so that, though I am the last to reach the departure platform, I have a guard of honour consisting of the Manchu and Chinese staff, who make respectful inquiries about what plays I have seen and my illustrious friend's plans.

Where is there a theatrical or cinema artist in Europe or America whose renown, even from a distance, would bring together the whole staff of a railway station and soften the face of a customs official who was on the point of taking severe measures?



SIBERIA

Seven days to Moscow! This is more than a journey, it is an ocean passage. Having settled down in the train, we adopt a routine. The sleeping-car is roomy and heated by a good stove, and tea, as in China, is *ad libitum*. My French avarice makes me regret the baskets of fruit and canned foods which I thought it necessary to purchase at Harbin, for the dining-car offers us a plentiful supply of cutlets, minced in the Russian fashion, of scrambled eggs, the vegetable soup known as *shchi*, and other national delicacies. My neighbour the engineer, with still greater foresight, has been dragging round with him ever since his departure an enormous hamper of provisions supplied by a great Parisian caterer, with plates, knives, and forks. Since he is anxious not to take it back with him, he shuts himself up at meal-times, but offers me a slice of *foie gras* or a sardine if he sees me pass by. My companion at table is an English major on his way home from Japan; and a very pleasant one he is, for he has a subtle, curious, and sensitive mind. Our books of tickets ensure us a supply of food for the whole journey across Russian territory, as far as the Polish frontier, for the quite reasonable sum of twenty-three American dollars. The Russian management provides for four meals a day, the last of which, corresponding to the old-fashioned supper in our part of the world, is served at ten o'clock in the evening. This is too late for me; but the chief attendant himself proposes that I should exchange my un-

Siberia

used ticket for something else. In this way I obtain my supply of cigarettes and have a helping of caviar and a liqueur-glass of vodka every day.

I read a little, but prefer to look at the country, with which I have felt on friendly terms from the first. Sparse northern forests of arctic birch-trees scarcely taller than a man or thicker than one's fist, barren heaths stretching away as far as the eye can see, where reddening osier-beds droop over the stagnant waters of the ponds. The Siberian tundra, which reminds me of the "*jarrelles*" of my native Franche-Comté. Hills bristling with pine-trees, not planted at intervals, as in China, but huddled together against the cold, like the fir-trees on our French mountains. Along the snowy road comes a sleigh drawn by a horse, which trots with head reined back under the arch connecting the two shafts. It is carrying a dark mass which I recognize to be a load of hay as it stops at the white wooden barrier. If the train were not going so fast, I might ask the driver, muffled in his beard and sheepskin, whether the second crop has been good this year, as I should a farmer in my own village. Local time, however, is six hours in advance of Moscow time. We are at the far end of Asia, beyond Lake Baikal. Siberia is like an enormous arm stretched out as a prolongation of Russia, and leads to northern Europe, where my ancestors were born; so no doubt that is why I feel a sense of fatherly welcome in this broad, wild land.

At every station—that is, three or four times a day—we get out for a breath of air, which smells of snow, for, like me, my two companions are men of the north, who find the cold healthful. The stations are large wooden buildings with a number of signboards indicating the waiting-rooms, the hot-water supplies, and the lunch-counters. At all of them there is a crowd in working-clothes, but by no means in rags.

Siberia

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On their feet they wear galoshes, or the birch-bark gaiters known as *lapti*. They all wear a jersey or sheepskin, and the women have shawls over their shoulders, pulled over the head like a hood. They watch us pass through, but do not stare, for they have other things to do. Some of them are workmen on the way to their meal, and the rest travellers like ourselves, for behind our sleeping-car are a number of ordinary coaches, in which nearly every place is occupied, as we can tell from the unceasing procession of soldiers on leave or families on holiday along the corridor of our own car, which leads to the dining-car. If they disturb us, they never fail to use the most explicit and courteous of formulas: "*Izvinite, pojaluista*—Excuse me, please."

Among other privileges destroyed by the Russian Revolution is that of the ordinal number, in inverse ratio to the price of the seat. There are no longer any first- or second-class carriages. But in some the seats are upholstered, in others of bare wood. The tariff makes a distinction between these two classes, one called *miagbki* (soft) and the other *zhostki* (hard), in favour of the latter—just as Monsieur Jourdain's father was not a cloth-merchant, but knew one stuff from another and would let his friends have some in consideration of a money payment. But our steamship companies have recourse to roundabout expressions of the same sort to flatter people's vanity, without even the excuse of doing it on principle, for they are apt to refer to their second-class passengers as "tourist class." But whether soft or hard, every compartment allows room for the traveller to lie down and becomes his sleeping-compartment at night.

Nobody has begged alms of us during the whole journey. Only once, on the platform in front of the car where I was smoking a cigarette and had just offered one to one of the

guards, two workmen passing by asked for a share: "*Prashu ugostite* (Please treat us)," they said; then went off contentedly, touching their caps. But when a boy came up in turn, I refused him this treat, and the guard drove him off.

I enjoy a talk with this official, who is no longer young and whose wrinkled face has a resigned and ingratiating smile. He spends his life travelling to and fro between Europe and Asia, joining his family in Moscow for a day or two every fortnight. He has two daughters, one of whom is married, and a son of eighteen, who is already "in the service." The service in question is the industrial service, which is quite as rigorously compulsory as military service was in former days, and lasts longer.

Early in the afternoon of the second day we arrived at Verkhne-Udinsk, or Upper Udinsk. Nizhne-Udinsk, or Lower Udinsk, is a little farther on, in the direction of Lake Baikal, about three hundred miles away. We stopped there for twenty minutes. We had hardly set foot on the ground before a crowd of men in serried ranks with a wild and determined expression, evidently suited to the occasion, swept us along the railway tracks as far as an open space beyond the station. A platform had been put up there and a party delegate was waiting for us, easily recognizable by his pointed black beard, his strained expression, and his "intellectual's" jacket. He was standing with the tips of his fingers pressed upon the table, ready to begin his speech. In spite of his forced voice and distinct enunciation, his words seemed to freeze as they left his lips, and fell with a dull thud on the hard snow. However, I understood enough to remind me that it was November 6 and that the anniversary of the Communist Revolution was being celebrated in this distant province.

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"Mongol comrades," cried the orator, "it is to you, too, that I am speaking, for you have realized that the proletariat of your country was bound to join that of ours." The district of Verkhne-Udinsk is, in fact, adjacent to the frontier of Outer Mongolia, which is now a Soviet Republic, and among the Russian crowd could be distinguished a few of these nomads, with their hair braided like a horse's tail beneath their fur caps, and their impassive, earthy-hued faces, with the expressionless eyes. "Some of those people could not even tell you their name." This remark, made in a low voice by someone near me, was greeted with smiles. It is not considered a breach of proletarian brotherhood to treat some comrades like inferior brethren.

Suddenly a deep chord blazed forth in the icy air and filled it with a vibrant warmth. At the end of the speech a brass band struck up the *Internationale*, while the whole gathering raised their hats simultaneously or saluted in the military fashion. The full harmonies, the solemn rhythm, and the musical sentiment lent this hymn an admirable note of conviction, remote though it may be from our ideas.

When the train starts again I rejoin my companions for the game of bridge with which every day has to end in the engineer's compartment, his provision-basket serving as a seat for whichever of us is dummy. The English major, who, of the three of us, is certainly the most declared enemy of Communism, as much from conviction as by reason of his profession, is also the first to express the opinion that it might, perhaps, be fitting to show some sort of interest in the national festival of the country whose guests we are. We agree, but wonder how it should be done. We must consult the interpreter who is attached to the train for all unofficial services which may be needed by travellers. He is a young Israelite

from Odessa, very lively and amusing as a rule, but on this occasion our very first words cause him considerable agitation. Should we bring the officials on the train together round a bottle of vodka? That would make us seem to be patronizing them. Should we attend their meeting in the evening and express our sympathy? But we could not be admitted without previous discussion, and with these impressionable Russians nobody knows what may be the result of an argument. Our friendly intentions must not expose us to an affront. Finally we decide to send the Moscow Government a telegram of congratulation, couched in general terms and with no allusion to the form of that Government. The interpreter undertakes to send it off, and during the evening he brings us the thanks of his comrades, which, he says, were voted by acclamation.

The towns are usually some distance from the station—a precaution dating from the old régime—and are all built of wood, down to the square bell-tower which rises above the wide roofs, like those of Swiss chalets. We also see some buildings near the railway built of pine planks which are not yet blackened by time. All of them are on the same model: vast buildings rising on three sides of a square courtyard, some serving as dwelling-houses, others for housing the cattle and agricultural machinery. The tractors mounted on trucks which block the sidings in all the stations are intended for the communal farms. My American friend is pleased to recognize in them imports from his own country. But once the plan of national equipment—known from the period allotted for its completion as the Five-Year Plan—has been carried out, Russia will be able to manufacture enough to meet its own needs.

The theories of Karl Marx and the Communist doctrine

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derived from them are alike disproved by experience. Labour can do nothing without capital, and the happiness of man depends upon his consciousness and not upon the principle on which he is grouped. "Class consciousness" is merely a sociological allegory. But if materialism is unsound, the material progress of a people is not lacking in interest. Co-operative farming makes it possible to obtain machines which make the work far less laborious and more productive. The people of my own village in Franche-Comté have long since managed to organize the production of Gruyère cheese on co-operative principles, and more recently still they have instituted a co-operative system of insurance against accidents to their cattle. Many of them nowadays see what an advantage it would be to them to own common grain-stores with mechanical elevators, and to have a credit system which would make it unnecessary for them to sell their crop as they do now, at the earliest possible moment and at the lowest price.

But now we come to an open yard alongside the railway, where men with bushy beards and women with shawls over their heads are plying the pick and shovel as they make a cutting in the earthen embankment, on which soldiers, stationed along it at intervals, sit quietly among the pine-trees watching them with rifles across their knees. These are recalcitrant peasants deported to this place, where their labour is needed. The Trans-Siberian Railway has to be converted into a double track along its whole length, which amounts to over four thousand miles. These people have probably been brought from a great distance. To French people this would be a terrible punishment. But the Russian, with his happy-go-lucky temperament and nomad instincts, accommodates himself to it better. Nobody thinks of escaping or rebelling.

Our car fills up in turn. At Omsk a wealthy family gets

## *Siberia*

in, occupying three compartments for a father and mother, a married daughter, and her two children. With the exception of the son-in-law, who is slender and elegant and takes great care of his downy blond beard, they are all fat and jolly. The father, who blocks the corridor quite as completely whether he stands facing us or sideways, steps back into his compartment whenever one of us happens to pass by, and, having recognized our nationality, apologizes in English or French. The daughter hums songs from morning till night. They are traders who have grown rich in spite of Communism.

From this point onwards the old guard lets down the upper berth in my sleeping-compartment and my neighbour's every evening, in case any traveller should present himself at one of the places where we stop during the night. Every morning I regain confidence on finding myself still alone. But on the sixth day, at the station of Sverdlovsk, formerly Ekaterinburg, where we arrive at three o'clock in the afternoon, a fat man appears panting at my door at the very moment of departure. He is a German engineer, going on leave to Cologne, where he has his family. He is effusive and declares almost at once that "our two countries ought to unite"; after which he informs me that he is dieting in order to get thinner and has already recovered the use of two holes in his belt; that he hands over nearly all his pay to his wife and children, being sure of obtaining his own board and clothing cheap through the co-operative stores at the factory. It is a very large metal-works, having a technical staff of four hundred Germans attached to it. They have their own club-room, beer, and sausages. He has just been constructing a blast-furnace and has started it going. "They did not want to let me go," he says, "for fear it might get out of order during my absence." Rus-

## Warriors

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sian workmen, he says, are still careless and lack experience. Besides, they hold so many meetings and make so many speeches for the purpose of organizing their work that they sometimes forget to work at all. But these are the faults of youth. They may yet be moulded by training. What is certain is that the factory is working and still continues to expand. The Five-Year Plan is more than an empty phrase.



WARRIORS

A general and two majors in the Soviet army are travelling in the "soft" class. The English major, who makes valiant attempts to speak Russian, has made friends with them in a spirit of military comradeship and told them that there is a Frenchman present who plays chess. The general, who has been winning game after game from his subordinates, would like nothing better than to encounter a less accommodating opponent; but he is still on his guard. "The Frenchman," he says, "is an old fox." Is this definition intended to apply to the whole species, or to the individual whom he may have observed in walking through our car? I look at myself in the looking-glass hanging in the wash-room and can find no resemblance; but one is never a good judge of one's own face. For his part he thinks it over, and after three days, aided by the boredom of travelling, he decides to send me a challenge.

I start by covering myself with shame for lack of practice, besides which my attention is distracted by the landscape which is gliding past. We are crossing the Urals: a rocky cliff

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with fir-trees clinging to it runs along the edge of a gloomy river, along which a boat laden with nets is being slowly rowed. It is like a Switzerland with no glaciers or sharp ridges, which has settled down in the course of thousands of centuries, shrunken, pensive, concentrated, and venerable. As I pursue these dreams, I lose a pawn to which I attached great importance, barely escape check to my queen by sacrificing a knight, and finish the game somewhat out of temper. The general is disappointed in me and lets me go. We have exchanged no remarks beyond the formulas required by the rules of the game.

But as we cross the snowy plains of Great Russia on the following day, I take a brilliant revenge upon an enemy over-sure of victory, and rout him in a few moves. Recovering himself, he now tries some skilful manœuvres, which I am fortunate enough to frustrate. He looks at me kindly. One of his officers, who has been following the game, asks as a favour to be allowed to take his place, and is worsted in turn before he has even had time to marshal his forces. His rout is complete. The general offers me a cigarette; we enter into conversation.

Night is falling, and we should be in Moscow by now but for a freight-train which was derailed in front of us between Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk. This delay will probably make us miss our connexion with western Europe, but I am far from complaining of this, for it enables us to prolong our conversation. The other major, who had been lying on the upper berth reading till now, is interested in our conversation and comes down. The English major is happy to see us getting on as well as he had hoped. A serious-looking person of whose identity I am unaware, but whose black blouse coming up to the chin gives him a pedantic appearance, has entered uncere-



## Warriors

moniously and is listening to us. There are six of us in the compartment, where the heat of the stove causes a mist on the window-panes, and cigarette smoke hangs like a cloud round the lamp in the ceiling. Military cloaks fall over our shoulders. It is impossible to move, for our knees are touching and our breath mingles. All our ideas spurt out, as it were, as though under pressure. We are hermetically sealed up in this superheated atmosphere of intimacy. In an hour or two's time we shall have parted, never to meet again.

"—Unless we meet on the field of battle," says one of the majors. "You will shoot me, Major, if you take me prisoner." To which the English officer, too polite to start a serious argument, smilingly replies: "Perhaps." Next they chaff him about questions which have already become a habit with them, repeating in chorus like a refrain: "Why make war on the Hindus? For England. Why fight the Communist Republics? For England." "Quite true," says the major; "everybody is not fortunate enough to fight for the happiness of humanity." "We will make it happy, and you too, in spite of England." Wounded in their convictions, they put a good face on the matter, still loyal to the chivalrous traditions of their profession, though wearing the uniform with the red star.

They are handsome fellows, with a martial bearing, young and gay, as rarely happens in our parts once a man has gained his second stripe. Yesterday, during our game of bridge, one of them was telling the other an anecdote which must have amused more than one officers' mess under the old régime, for it is about the White and Black Hussars. "You say it was one of our men who was disrespectful to you?" says the sergeant to the girl who has just complained to him. "Well, what of it? He was only doing his duty." "But he had black

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facings on his uniform." "What! One of the Black Hussars? The low brute!" And he gave the traditional imitation of the sergeant with the heavy moustache and deep voice, who has now disappeared from the Russian army, just as the sapper or the drum-major has done from the French. Next they examined a new automatic pistol, weighing it in the hand, testing the sights, taking aim and trying the trigger, so eagerly that the general, possibly fearing an accident, shook his head at them. This was enough. The revolver was restored to its case. The authority of his rank is increased by that of his age: he is thirty-seven.

He is tall and slender, and his face, clear-cut as steel, would be hard if it were not for his eyes, bright with the energy of ardent and profound thought. Where can I have seen him before? Since yesterday I have been pursuing a vague memory. He leans forward to hear me better, and suddenly I am back in April 1916, at the port of Marseilles, where a brigade of Russian infantry is being landed. It has come all the way round Asia from Vladivostok, and I am attached as sub-lieutenant interpreter to the French mission which is to receive them and settle them in their quarters at the camp of Mailly, near Châlons. The men in their khaki tunics fall into line in a way that shows them to be thoroughly well drilled, almost all of them being veterans, covered with crosses and medals. We are presented to General Lokhvitzi, who is in command of the brigade. I think I see him again as he watches me. He is merely older, his brow is seamed with more anxious wrinkles, but he has the same commanding profile, the same inward fire, as he bends towards us with his thin, fragile form, and his bony face smiles at us with an effort. Even the most thoughtless of his officers lowers his voice in mentioning his name. He is severe, especially to-

Warriors

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wards himself, so they dread his reproof more than a punishment. In camp, during the idle afternoons when we amused ourselves in the mess-room, some drinking, others singing or twanging the guitar, he would shut himself up and work. If he came out, he strode on his way. He had no leisure. As soon as he appeared, we all straightened ourselves up, both physically and mentally.

Twenty years ago he was devoting his life to the defence of the Empire and all that made for its unity, power, and glory. His country is even dearer to him now for having produced an idea. This may be illusory, false, or harmful when carried into action, but what of that? It is the idea that is fine in his eyes, for his life is dedicated to it. Even so the French Revolution, with its ferocious intrigues, legal massacres, and bloody riots, produced a pure flame of heroism and youth on the frontier. I think of Hoche, Marceau, and Kléber. The general seems to read my thoughts. "Why do you fight against us, then?" he asked. "You, too, have had your Revolution." I reply that it was precisely that experience which has shown us how mistaken it was. "Yet," he remarks, "it was a splendid age."

After ten years of campaigning in Siberia, he is about to see Russia again for the first time, having been sent to the hot springs of Kislovodsk in the Caucasus on sick-leave. The war against the White armies was a guerrilla warfare during which everyone was constantly on the look-out and no quarter was given, conditions being still further aggravated by the rigours of the climate. He also fought against Chinese troops five years ago, when the Soviet Government and that of Nankin were both struggling for control of the railway in Manchuria. He questions me on what I have seen in China and listens very closely to my replies. I tell him that the ad-

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ministration is being organized, and that the training of the army is progressing. He shows his approval and recalls former days. "At that time," he says, "the command was hardly any good at all. But the Chinese soldier is a good soldier, vigorous and patient. He knows how to die." And he repeats musingly: "Yes, he knows how to die."



## SONGS OF THE FORGE

"Take the No. 1, which passes the door, and get out at the first stopping-place after the Conservatoire."

The young woman at the hotel desk who gives me this information in French is very pleasant, but I do not know how to take a street-car in Moscow. The crowd on the pavement in the middle of the square is snapped up by the conveyance as it goes past and absorbed into the swarm of humanity already massed on the step. But I do not possess the same adhesive powers and should certainly fall off by the way. Or if I did succeed in maintaining my position, it would be for ever: the regulations say that one is to get out at the other end, passing down the whole length of the car, which seethes like a cauldron as people press one upon the other. I prefer not to attempt it and am content to follow the rails on foot. Where the lines branch I am in difficulties, but it suffices to wait, noting the numbers of the passing cars. I have plenty of time, for the train does not leave till half past ten this evening.

As we had expected, we missed it yesterday. Our railway-

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car, which goes on regularly from the northern to the western station—the one for White Russia—spent the night there on a siding without any lights or water. However, the guards gave us some tea this morning, and at nine o'clock we left the station without being asked for our tickets or passports. My two companions were both expected, one of them at his Embassy, the other at an engineers' conference. At the French Embassy, on the Pomeranskaya, I am sure of a good welcome, but I postpone this till later, preferring for the moment the keen pleasure of wandering wherever chance may lead me.

Having failed to obtain a room at the hotel, or even a bath, for lack of hot water, I first find a refuge in the café for foreigners which occupies the ground floor of the corner building. There are no waiters, but waitresses, who are young, obliging, and even familiar. One of them has already stationed herself at the side of a customer, a sturdy, candid American, who talks of nothing but the temperature, not out of prudence, but out of politeness.

A few steps away I unexpectedly come upon the Kremlin, a city within a city, like the Imperial City at Pei-p'ing; but the round or quadrangular towers on the ramparts are crowned by pointed roofs dating from the Middle Ages. Beyond them is an exuberant architectural growth in which palaces break out into pediments, and churches into bulbous towers. Down below, under the bridge leading to the postern gate, is a public garden, in which children are playing with hoops under the eye of their grandmothers, who sit knitting on the seats in their mittens. A damp cold prevails like that of a cellar, so I resume my walk.

Here is the quay overlooking the stagnant river. Trucks rattle noisily over the paved road. The street along which I

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return has book-shops in it, all of which display in their windows the portrait of Lenin, with his broad face, round shoulders, and short jacket and his arm extended towards the crowd, together with numerous statistical and historical works on the Soviet régime. There are a few old books, which have survived from pillaged libraries—for instance, an odd volume of *Les Misérables* or of *L'Histoire des Girondins*. Shop-gazers stand looking at the titles. There are queues outside the doors of the Government shops, where butter, fish, bread, preparations of pork, and preserves are sold. Farther on, a monumental gate opens upon a row of wooden stalls where dealers are crying their goods. This is one of the little side-branches of trade which the Government disdains to regulate. I make my way through three rows of loungers to get closer to a dealer in second-hand books, who calls out: "*Tridtset', sorok!* (Thirty, forty!)" just as a Parisian pedlar might cry: "*Trente, quérante!*" For eighty kopecks I acquire both volumes of a most interesting collection of documents on the subject of the history of property in Russia, published in 1926 by the State Press. I go and leave these at the hotel, where a most obliging manager is kind enough to treat me as a client, though I am not staying there. I also find an excellent lunch, for seven and a half roubles, served in an imposing dining-room, with a head waiter in evening dress. The exchange being at the fixed rate of two roubles for an American dollar, it is a little dear, but all the restaurants in the city are co-operative, so I have no right to enter them.

I next make an attempt to keep a promise made to one of his relatives in China to go and see the Chinese co-director of the Manchurian Railway. His office is in an alley, or *pereulok*, known as the Maly Kislovski, or Little Kislov Alley. Street-car No. 1, which is obliging enough to act as my guide, takes

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me across the river, turns to the right opposite a large building looking like a market, and turns down a long street with narrow pavements swarming with people. They wear working-clothes, which are almost a uniform. There are no rags, but no smart clothes either. All the men wear a blouse without any necktie, and a short-visored cap, and all the women coats of woollen stuff over linen blouses, with either a *béret* on their heads or else their own neatly dressed short hair. At long intervals one sees an otter, astrakhan, or sable fur, the only luxury of the well-dressed women. Nobody loiters about. Everybody looks busy and walks fast. Few people smile, and they barely glance at one as one goes past. They are hurrying to their offices, yards, or shops. The scene has the animation of an open-air factory.

Standing on a wooden platform at the cross-streets, the traffic policeman makes the heavy trucks stop dead. There are a few private automobiles. Taxis are few and far between. But the rickety cabs of the old régime, with their skinny nags, their wobbly wheels, and their flat-nosed, bearded drivers, are being allowed to die out gradually through old age.

Here is the Conservatoire, built in the old days, with columns and pediments and a square courtyard, where young people are coming and going briskly, carrying music-cases or violin-cases. I scan the notices at the corners of the streets more carefully and find a Great Kislov Alley. The little one is probably not far off, but I do not venture to question one of these workers, who get out of my way without slackening their pace, as though they looked on me as an obstacle and not a man.

The Great Kislov Alley leads to the Lower Alley of the same name, which itself opens into another of these little streets with no shops, but only low houses with closed doors.

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There are few passers-by, and no carriages. Traffic is concentrated in the main arteries and passes by these surviving backwaters of old Moscow. An old cab-driver waiting patiently by the pavement amid these solitudes signs to me. He demands a rouble for driving me to my destination and then puts me down there almost at once. I need only have walked down a side-street not a hundred yards long. I point out that it was not far, but he refuses to reduce the fare, saying with a sly gleam in his cunning little peasant's eyes: "A promise is a promise." I hurriedly alight, especially as a policeman has come up whom I had not seen at first, and ring the bell at a door opening into a paved courtyard. A porter wearing an apron comes forward and tells me that I have come to the wrong place, after which he shows me into the street again without further explanation. Who does live there, then? The Brothers Karamazov, or the old woman who lent money and has just been murdered by the student Raskolnikov? I might imagine myself to be back in the sinister age of Dostoyevsky if it were not for the policeman with the red star on his cap who, seeing me at a loss, obligingly gives me information. When I come out again after leaving my card—for the high official is away or has something better to do than to receive me—he is still in the same place, and as I walk away I feel him following me with his eyes.

The day draws to its close. No doubt that is the reason why, work being over or a new shift having come on duty, crowds are thronging the entrance of this popular cinema. I take my place in the queue and gradually draw nearer to the box-office, when a client who had already gone by turns round in a fury. She accuses the ticket-seller, who has just refused to give her seats, of having sold them to the person coming after her. Is this bribery or favouritism? There is a

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violent altercation which makes the bystanders smile, but the onward surge of the crowd carries the aggrieved woman away on its stream, still jabbering.

Having obtained our tickets, we wait in a waiting-room like that of a station for the doors to be opened. Moved by some instinct akin to that by which the primeval nebula develops into a planetary system, the crowd standing in rows has begun circulating counter-clockwise "with a direct and uniform movement," as they say in astronomy, though nobody is trying to get past the others. Only a few resist this impulse and stand still at the edge of the mass as though thrown off by centrifugal force and checked in their flight by the wall. I, too, stand still and watch the unending procession: families with their little children, young men looking straight in front of them, intellectuals conversing with demonstrative gestures as they walk, all passing and repassing with a dull, monotonous tramp of feet. The scene is typical of their lives. Is not the society which the Soviet régime aims at producing bound to revolve endlessly upon its own centre, like a wheel of a machine? They work to live. They live to work. And so on, indefinitely.

Suddenly two young girls whom I had not noticed at first, because they were near the centre, approach the circumference. Both of them are wearing black overalls like those of schoolgirls. They are arm in arm, and I see one of them bend down with a caressing gesture and rub her still childish cheek against her friend's shoulder. On this steep rock like polished steel, it is hard to distinguish the little blue flower growing in a crack. And yet it is immortal.

The film, which is called *The Tempest*, is a drama of crime, in which the brave heroine has to face a traitor in an obvious wig, only in the end to prove beyond a doubt the in-

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nocence of a condemned man. The worn film is scored with long lines like a deluge of black rain. But there are some fine scenes in the civil war, with soldiers entrenched in the streets, and another which elicits loud applause, in which we see the parliamentary committee, composed of solemn, portly bourgeois, handing in their resignations to the emaciated but proud delegates of the Communist Party.

The Red Square behind the Kremlin has borne this name since the Middle Ages and deserves it more than ever today. The church whose five towers press their bulbous, gilded roofs close together like a cluster of flowers is now put to secular uses. It is purposely left unlit, to symbolize the dark ignorance of former days. I regret that I cannot see the mosaics on the walls better. But in the full light at the door there is a clumsily faked photograph showing the Sovereign Pontiff, with his tiara on his head, shaking hands with President Poincaré, stiffly attired in evening dress like a head waiter. One could almost weep at such silliness. Many sightseers, like myself, have paid their ten kopecks at the door. They go past it without saying a word, and that is the best thing to do.

On the other hand, the Soviet Government has shown its sense by leaving the monument to Minin and Pozharski, the two patriotic heroes, still in place in front of the church. It was put up, I believe, in the last century and represents the two Russians as wearing short tunics in the Greek style and carrying the short sword of classical tragedy. It is a crushing testimony to the state of taste among the educated classes at that period.

The Lenin monument, standing with its back to the Kremlin on one of the long sides of the square, required no such background to throw it into relief. Square and massive, with none but straight lines, its majesty is still further heightened

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by these two sentinels, standing rigid, silent, and austere before the gate of the tomb. A few years ago the crowd used to file past at this twilight hour to gaze upon the lifeless features of the prophet of materialism in his glass coffin. It is no longer admitted, for the process of embalming turns out to have been imperfect. Nature has won the day. Physical death remains unconquered.

Here is the mausoleum of a despot in the centre of the city, as proud as a throne and as solid as a fortress. I think of the tomb of Sun Yat-sen, far away near Nankin, on the summit of a hill, open, peaceful, raised above class and frontiers, and bathed on all sides in the virtue of humanity.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE
IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book is printed in *Estienne*, a linotype face designed by George W. Jones, the eminent English printer, and named in honour of the Estienne family.

THE ESTIENNE FAMILY—Henri Estienne (died 1520), a descendant of a Provençal noble family, came to Paris in 1502 and set up a printing establishment there. After his death his widow married his foreman, Simon de Colines, who carried on the business until 1526, when it passed into the possession of Robert Estienne (1503-59), Henri's second son, who had been his stepfather's assistant. In 1539 Robert was appointed king's printer by Francis I. He published eleven editions of the Bible and twelve of the New Testament alone, as well as a Latin dictionary and editions of the Latin classics, all involving much personal editorial work. As the result of disputes with the Faculty of Theology he moved to Geneva in 1551, where he set up a new printing establishment. His younger brother, Charles Estienne (c. 1504-64), took over the Paris establishment in 1551 and was appointed king's printer. Robert's son Henri Estienne (1531-98), a learned scholar, inherited the printing house at Geneva. Several disputes with the consistory inclined him to travel extensively in his later years. Later descendants continued the family tradition for scholarship and fine printing.



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